

# WIRE

pinski zoo

\* \* \*

*wild wild life*

lester young

bud powell

la monte young

steve lacy

ryuichi sakamoto

jazz passengers

nino rota



more music from the wire

plus

the wire 1990

# STEVE WILLIAMSON

## *A WALTZ FOR GRACE*



*"HE HAS A DUSKY AND BEAUTIFULLY EVEN TONE EXACT IN EVERY REGISTER .... THERE IS A CLASSIC DIGNITY ABOUT HIM .... NOT FAR SHORT OF MAGNIFICENT" ... THE WIRE.*

*STEVE'S DEBUT ALBUM IS AVAILABLE ON VERVE RECORDS  
ON MARCH 12TH 1990. CD, MC, LP.*



# WIRE MAGAZINE

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"I can definitely say that music won't stop.

It will continue to go forward."

CHARLIE PARKER, 1953.



## COVER:

Pinski

Zoo

Now's

Time

finding

True

Photo

by

Met

Yates

## WIRE

Issue 74

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## ST VITOUS HITS BATH

MIROSLAV VITOUS, Shankar, Egberto Gismonti and Robin Kenyatta are among the artists booked for this year's Bath International Festival, which will run at various venues from 25 May to 8 June. Full line-up is Ivo Papasov's Bulgarian Wedding Band (26 May); Slim Gaillard plus Robin Kenyatta Qt (27); Courtney Pine Band plus Louis Sclavis Qt (28); Chris Barber Band (30); Tony Orell Trio (31); Oliver Jones Trio (1 June); Mujician plus Arguelles (2); Danny Thompson (3); Steve Berry Trio (4); Miroslav Vitous (5); Shankar (6); British Summertime Ends (8); Egberto Gismonti Group plus Frevo (9); the New Andy Sheppard/Nana Vasconcelos Group plus Roberto Plaz's Latin Jazz Ensemble (10). Details from 0225 463362/466411.

## MAD COW DISEASE: SHOCKING NEW EVIDENCE

EX-HENRY COW reedsman Tim Hodgkinson will visit Siberia in April to seek out local shamans. On his return he embarks on a brief UK tour with ex-Cow cohort, guitarist Fred Frith. Catch them at Hull New Adelphi Club (2 May); Cardiff Chapter Arts Centre - tbc (4); Exeter Arts Centre (5); Sheffield - venue tbc (10); Leeds Adelphi (11); London Purcell Room (13). Details from 01 274 6784.

## ALL FOOT AND MOUTH

SHEFFIELD'S FOOT And Mouth Club have organised a weekend improvisation

festival from 30 March to 1 April. Ad hoc sessions from the pool of musicians begin the festival (30 March), followed by workshop sessions on the Saturday and Sunday afternoons and evening concerts by Paul Hession, Charles Wharf and Simon Fell plus SWIG plus the Modum Qt (31); John Russell, John Burcher, Phil Durrant plus Earth Ensemble (31). All events at the Untrified Gallery, Brown St, Sheffield. Details from 0742 345487.

## MOLTEN RAYA

TRUMPETER ENRICO RAYA is featured with The European Jazz Quintet in a UK April tour organised by Jazz South West. The group, which also includes Gerd Dudek (saxes), Rob Van Den Broeck (piano), Ali Haurand (bass) and Tony Levin (drums), will visit Exeter Arts Centre (6 April), Leicester Phoenix Arts Centre (7); Birmingham Midlands Arts Centre (8); London Electric Cinema (9, 10); Cardiff Four Bars Inn (11); Manchester Band On The Wall (12). Details from 0392 218368.

## HANS ACROSS THE OCEAN

HANS REICHEL, Tom Cox, Derek Bailey, Evan Parker and Shelley Hirsch are among the artists due to appear at this year's Nickelsdorf Festival, planned for 20-22 July. Other European festivals for your diaries: Ulrichsberger (27-29 April) has the Roscoe Mitchell New Chamber Ensemble, Tim Berne's Minature, the John Zorn Trio and the Maarten Altena Ensemble plus others; while Moers takes place this year from 1-4 June - artists tbc

## HAUS PARTY STARTING

LONDON'S JAZZHAUS will be presenting an improvisation project, 'Before Your Very Ears', on 6 and 7 April. Musicians participating are John Butcher, Steve Done, Will Evans, Maer Hutchinson, Vanessa Mackness, Phil Wachsmann and a special guest from Lapland, bassist Teppo Hautaaho, making his UK debut. Various groupings of the musicians will play each night, from approximately 9.30pm-11.30pm. Details from 01 240 0083.

## TOP GUTA

WORLD PREMIERES by Georgian composer Giya Kancheli, Elliott Carter, Iannis Xenakis and John Cage, UK premieres by Takemitsu, Nono and Sofia Gubaidulina, and personal appearances by Lukas Foss, Kaija Saariaho, the Willem Breuker Kollektief and the Arditti String Quartet are among the highlights of this year's Almeida Festival in London Islington which is scheduled for 13 June to 14 July.

The Carter piece is one of a series of ten world premieres commissioned from ten composers in ten different countries to celebrate the festival's tenth birthday - other contributors to the series include Gyorgy Kurtag and Scotland's James Clapperton. The Cage premiere, *Europea*, is a treatment of 18th and 19th century operas; while the Xenakis is a new choral work for voice and percussion. Other vocal highlights at the festival will include a 'Music For Words' project featuring compositions by authors Anthony Burgess and Paul Bowles plus a special Samuel Beckett tribute (with

settings of his texts by Cage, Feldman and others), and choral works by Arvo Part and Henryk Gorecki.

The Willem Breuker Kollektief perform a programme of orchestral suites based on Kurt Weill musicals; while the Arditti play four concerts of new music, including works (and several UK premieres) by Luis de Pablo, Helmut Lachenmann, Kaija Saariaho, Takemitsu, Nono and Gubaidulina. UK composers featured at the festival will include Mark Anthony Turnage, Vic Hyslop and Bernard Rands.

Perhaps the festival's most ambitious project is the visit of the State Chamber Orchestra of Georgia with a programme of new music from the Soviet Republics, including a special commission from leading Georgian composer Giya Kancheli. Details on all the above from 01 369 4404.

## STAYE ON!

LONDON NEW music fans can strut their stuff at five concerts this month. Clarinetist Ian Stuart's recital at the Purcell Room (28 April) will include Steve Reich's *New York Counterpoint* plus three pieces by Stockhausen; the London New Music group conclude their Purcell Room season with world premieres by leader Michael Blake and Nick Wilson plus the UK premiere of Morton Feldman's *Phono Trio* (20 April); the six-piano Piano Circus play world premieres by Steve Martland, Graham Finken and Simon Rackham (Purcell Room, 9 April); and the Euro-Asian Shiva Nova group play concerts at Willesden Green Library (7 April) and Islington's Almeida Theatre (29).

**YES, SAX PLEASE,  
WE'RE BRITISH  
TELECOM**

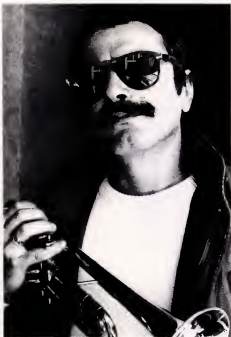
CLASSICAL SAXO-  
phonist John Harle takes his  
six-piece group (which features  
pianist John Lenehan) on a  
British Telecom-sponsored UK  
tour this month with a reper-  
toire that includes pieces by  
Duke Ellington, Gil Evans,  
Pat Metheny, Chick Corea and  
Phil Woods as well as the odd  
toy-tapper by Debussy, Ravel,  
Bartok plus Marvin Gaye's  
"Sexual Healing". Dates are  
Cheltenham Town Hall (5  
April); Cardiff St David's Hall  
(6); Wavendon The Stables (7);  
London Queen Elizabeth Hall  
(9); Southport Theatre (10);  
Manchester RNCM (11); Far-  
nam Maltings (21).

**HELL HOUNDS  
ON THE TRAIL**

THREE BLUES festivals  
are about to be unleashed on  
the UK. This year's Burnley  
Blues Festival (12-16 April)  
features ace Chicago guitarist  
Buddy Guy while the Carey  
Bell Band, Louisiana Red and  
Otis Grand's Dance Kings  
appear both at Burnley and at  
the concurrent Gloucester  
Blues Festival (13-16 April).  
More on these in our *Wake Up  
This Morning* column, p 12.  
Meanwhile Champion Jack  
Dupree is the main attraction  
at a blues weekend (25-26  
May) at Rufford Arts Centre,  
Ollerton, as part of Notting-  
ham's Mayfest activities. De-  
tails from 0602 824435.

**SCHOOL OF  
HARD BOPS**

SOUTH LONDON'S  
Musicworks offers a new term  
of evening classes beginning in  
April. Courses available in-



'Rico havo' ENRICO RAVA tours this month with the European Jazz  
Quartet. Photo by JEAN-MARC BIRRAUX

clude drums, bass, brass, sax-  
ophone, strings, piano, percus-  
sion and soul/R&B vocals.  
There are also two small pop-  
oriented ensembles and a big  
band for musicians seeking  
regular group practice, plus a  
gospel choir, a jazz scapella  
group and special courses for  
seven-14-year-olds that in-  
clude rapping, hip hop and a  
reggae orchestra. Costs range  
from £10 (children), £15 (un-  
employed) and £30 (working  
adult) for an eight-week  
course. Details from 01 737  
6103 (1pm-9pm).

**CLARIFYING  
MUDDY WATERS**

HIGHLIGHT OF  
Radio 3's jazz coverage this  
month is a new Paul Oliver  
series *Musings In The Blues*,

which begins on 6 April and  
continues for ten weeks. The  
programmes, broadcast at  
17.45 each Friday, will feature  
records and interviews and con-  
centrate on the period 1925-  
1960, examining a different  
blues topic each week. The  
first four episodes will look at  
the rise of narrative 12-bar  
blues; blues and poverty; the  
influence of voodoo; and the  
theme of urban crime in blues.  
Also on Radio 3 on 17 April  
(19.30-21.30) is a concert by  
Dizzy Gillespie's United Na-  
tions All Star Orchestra, which  
will include an interview with  
the trumpeter in the interval.

Radio 2 are to "extend" their  
jazz coverage, with five half-  
hour programmes each week  
(Monday to Friday, midnight  
to 00.30) hosted by Peter  
Clayton.

• now's the time

**TRANS-EUROPE  
MUHAL TRAIN**

PIANIST/COMPOSER  
Muhai Richard Abrams, re-  
cently awarded the first annual  
Jazzpar Prize by Denmark's  
Jazz Centre, plays several Prize  
Concerts with the Danish  
Radio Big Band in April. Fol-  
lowing the Prize ceremony and  
debut concert in Copenhagen  
on 31 March, Abrams and the  
big band (which featured on  
Miles Davis's *Aana LP*) will  
play Aarhus (1 April); Odense  
(2); and Paris (3). Also appear-  
ing at these concerts will be  
Paul Bley and Joakim Mulder  
with the Fredrik Lundin Trio  
and Gary Burton with the Thom-  
as Clausen Trio. A CD/LP  
release of Abrams's work with  
the big band is planned for  
later in the year, as is a further  
Jazzpar concert project involv-  
ing Abrams with a quartet of  
John Tchicai, Pierre Duge,  
Thomas Ovesen and Marilyn  
Mazur.

**FIDDLERS ON  
THE HOOF**

CANADIAN JAZZ-  
dance troupe Les Ballets Jaz-  
de Montreal make their UK  
debut at Sadler's Wells from  
3-14 April. They will present  
two programmes, featuring  
music by Pat Metheny, Jelly  
Roll Morton, Woody Herman,  
Stan Kenton, Astor Piazzolla  
and others. Details:  
01 278 8916.

Meanwhile, the Shobana  
Jeyasingh Dance Theatre pre-  
sent their *Orientalism* pro-  
gramme, featuring Michael  
Nyman's *Configurations* and  
(at selected concerts) the  
Balancescu String Quartet, at  
Bury St Edmunds Theatre  
Royal (17, 18 April); Luton  
St George's Theatre (19).  
Details 01 883 0144.

\* denotes that other concerts at this venue are listed in the next section, pp 4-5. Please note that the deadline for May listings is 1 April.

**Birmingham** Mailand Arts Centre (021 559 6205) \*

**Ronnie Scott** 29  
**Bracknell** South Hill Park (0344 484 123)

Ferré Brothers/George Rucci & The Improvise  
**Ian Smith** Q&C w/ Harry Beckert

**Evidence** 10  
**Orphy Robinson Sextet** 24

**Brighton** Jazz Club (0273 671621)

**Gordon Beck Trio** 6  
**Bristol** Albert Inn (0272 661968)

Ferré Brothers  
**Tonin Centre** 1,2

**Greg Lyons Q&C** 18  
**New Noakes Q&C** 22

**Within The Word** 29  
**St George Brandon Hall** (c/o Eastern Jazz) (0780 661991)

**Gordon Beck Trio** 5  
**Waterford Arts Centre**

**John Burgess Q&C** 5  
**Cambridge** Flambards

(c/o Cambridge Modern Jazz) (0223 625300)

**Heavy Q&C** 10  
**Sean Tracey Q&C** 28

**New Noakes Q&C** 27  
**Cardiff** Four Bars Inn (c/o Welsh Jazz) (0222 340591) \*

**Kelvin Flanagan** 12  
**Dave Wickens** 19

**Heavy Q&C / Consona Sol** 20  
**Lee Harding Q&C** 21

**Chris Hodgkins Q&C** 23  
**Diggers Duo** 30

**Coventry** The Y&C Club (c/o BNJ) (0203 306452)

**Lail Goshill Trio** 7  
**Howthorpe** Robin Hall

**Tommy Smith / John Burgess Trio** 21

**Hull** Spring Street Theatre (0482 22480)

**Gordon Beck Trio** 8  
**Kemp Lynn Arts Centre** (c/o Eastern Jazz) (0780 661991)

**Gordon Beck Trio** 3  
**Leeds** Trade Club (0532 630629)

**Iain Ballamy Q&C** 21  
**Oris Grand & The Dance Kings** 28

**Manchester** Band On The Wall (061 834 1786) \*

**Dudu Pukwana Q&C** 5  
**Aperto** 10

**Gary Boyle's Triple Echo** 17  
**Hans Thersaunk** 25

**Snake Davis & The Charmers** 26  
**Mold** Theatre Clwyd (c/o Welsh Jazz) (0222 340591)

**Dutch Swing College** 1,2  
**Band** 8

**Gary Barker & Jamie Talbot** 10  
**Wakefield** Jazz Action

(0624 374900)

**Kenny Davern** 10  
**Gary Barker & Jamie Talbot** 8

**Wavendon** The Stable (0908 583928) \*

**Charly Antolini's Jazz Power** 1

**John Dankworth Bag Band** 8  
**Band** 15

**All-Star Q&C** - benefit for Bill Le Sage  
**Ralph Sutton** 14

**Scott Hamilton & Brian Lemon Trio** 10  
**George Fume** 28

**Yeovil** Orpheus Theatre (c/o Jazz) (0935 28917)

**Courtesy Pine Band** 4  
**Quebecor** Mal Pub (c/o Jazz) (0935 28917)

**Peter King Q&C** 30  
**LONDON**

**Bass Clef** NI (01 729 2476)

**John Etheridge Q&C** 4  
**DHSS**

**Sue Shattock, Terry**

**Chris Beacoe Q&C**

**Shrewsbury** Music Society

**John Burgess Trio** 1  
**Southampton** Jazz Society

(0703 777424)

**Dave Cliff** 24  
**Spilby** Theatre (0750 32936)

**Gordon Beck Trio** 7  
**Stafford** Gamble

(c/o 0785 212037)

**Duncan Mackay & Mike Walker** 11

**Swansea** Leland Club (c/o Welsh Jazz) (0222 340591)

**Chris Hodgkins Q&C** 24  
**Torquay** Marmos (0805 291334)

**Ronnie Scott Q&C** 5  
**Tunbridge Wells** Trinity Arts Centre (0852 344099)

**Hard Lines w/ Jim Mullin** 29

**Wakefield** Jazz Action (0624 374900)

**Kenny Davern** 10  
**Gary Barker & Jamie Talbot** 8

**Wavendon** The Stable (0908 583928) \*

**Charly Antolini's Jazz Power** 1

**John Dankworth Bag Band** 8  
**Band** 15

**All-Star Q&C** - benefit for Bill Le Sage  
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**Peter King Q&C** 30  
**LONDON**

**Bass Clef** NI (01 729 2476)

**John Etheridge Q&C** 4  
**DHSS**

**Sue Shattock, Terry**

**4** **Disley Band** 11,12

**Heb Geller** 18,19

**Wayne Batchelor Q&C** 1  
**Arguelles** 22

**Blow The Fuse, Duke of Wellington** NI (01 249 3729)

**Lucy Ray** 5  
**Dangerous Designs** 12

**Mary Fagan, Steve Lodder, Sioned Jones** 19

**Jeanette Mason Trio** 26  
**Bulls Head** SW13 (01 876 3241)

**Hard Lines** 25  
**Electric Cinema** W11

**Car O' Nine Tails / Poultry Birds** 2,3

**Half Moon Theatre** E1 (01 700 4000)

**Lateral Thinking** 1  
**Mike Gibbs Band** 22

**Holloway Rocket** N7 (c/o 01 437 4967)

**Club Amadisa - Jazz Against Apartheid** 4,20

**Jazz Cafe** N16 (01 359 4936)

**DHSS** 1  
**Wayne Batchelor Q&C** 8

**Ed Jones Q&C** 14

**Tommy Chase Q&C** 15

**Alexei Kanyashu-Kuhn Trio** 15

**Sarah-Jane Morris Q&C** 16,17

**Dudu Pukwana Q&C** 13

**Nick Stephens Septet** 20  
**Arguelles** 28

**Jazzhaus, Duke Of Wellington** NI (01 249 3729) \*

**Dreamtime** 27  
**Dreamtime w/ Mervyn**

**Alfrica** 20  
**The Kerfield** SE5

(c/o 01 326 0326)

**Tommy Barlow Q&C** 1,10,17,24

**100 Club** W1 (01 636 0935)

**Uzbek** 10,11  
**Pembury Tavern** E8

**John Burgess Q&C** 1  
**Pizza Express** W1

(01 437 9595)

**Charlie Houchaw Q&C** 1

**Prince Of Orange** SE16 (01 237 9181)

**Hard Lines** 18  
**Queen Elizabeth Hall** SE1

(01 928 8800) \*

**Knitting Factory 1: Jazz Passengers, Carlew,**

**Myra Melford Trio,** 15

**Mac Ribot** 26  
**Knitting Factory 2:**

**Sonny Shattock Band,** 16

**Miracle Room, Busho**

**Red Rose Club** N7 (c/o LMC 01 487 5569)

**Peer Casack, Clive Bell,**

**Nicola Collins, Charles Hayward** 1

**Qualombo Exponares /**

**Diggers Duo** 15

**Vanessa Mackness, Paul Rogers, John Butcher** 29

**Ronnie Scott's Club** W1 (01 439 0177)

**Cedar Walton Q&C** 2-14

**Chico Freeman's Brain** 1

**Sturm** 18-28

**Royal Festival Hall Foyer** SE1 (01 928 8800)

**Chris Biscoe Q&C** 27

**The Sessions, Bull's Head** SE24 (c/o 01 800 0156)

**Slant / John Butcher** 2

**Roland Ramanan Band** 23

**Seven Dials Club** WC2 (01 240 0443)

**Jean Toussaint Q&C** 7

**Walford Jarvis** 7

**Cliffmans Arms Centre** B5 (01 569 1176)

**Najma Akhtar** 16

**D.L. Menard & The Louisiana Aces** 20

**Sarah Jane Morris Band** 27

**Willesden Green Library** NW10 (01 451 4294)

**Buchens Of Distinction** 4

**Heavy Q&C** 11

**Lift** 25

HARLE is our darling—BIG JOHN node psychology on the jase at seven everywhere. Photo by HOWARD SOOLEY.



steve lacy

## wail of the times

Soprano saxist Steve Lacy tells Mike Fish about his new LP



Anthem and the old ones that

were made at the wrong speeds.

Photo by Jean-Marc Birraux.

SINCE WE were meeting a few weeks after Sam Beckett's passing, I wondered if Steve Lacy, surely a kindred spirit, had had much contact with the writer.

"I met him a couple of times. I needed permission to use some of his texts about ten years ago, and I met him then. He was beautiful about it, very gentle and generous. We tried to record that music several times but never to my satisfaction. I sent him a tape of what we did, but I had no response. Maybe he never heard it."

Someday, we may hear that music. It's just one of the many projects Steve Lacy has somewhere on his drawing board. The most prolific of record-makers has slowed up in the studios of late, but he still has plenty of unrealized ideas. Even so, we may have seen the last of the saxophonist who'd take up any gauntlet for a chance to play. Is he still asked to participate in such one-off collaborations as his duo tour with Steve Arguelles?

"Yes, and I don't do them any more. That was one of the last, really. I'm refusing things like that because I want to concentrate on what I most want to do. I'll still do a few outside things, like with this Italian big band, the Kept Orchestra, who know my music and are very good. If it serves some purpose, I'm open to it. Casual liaison doesn't interest me any more. I prefer more deeply explored relationships — you play better."

Hence the focus on his long-standing group, the sextet, and his ongoing series of records for RCA Novus. The new one, *Anthem*, propagates a line which is becoming one of the most distinguished jazz projects of this time. It's also, says Steve, about this time.

"About last year. There were five revolutions to think about, the French one and the jazz revolution — what went down in the 60s came up again. The principal subject of the record is freedom and revolution. Man, I don't like to discuss it too much because it's — you'll hear it, you'll hear it. If I start

enumerating what's on it, it sounds silly to me. I'm very happy with it and I don't want to say any more about it."

Lucky there's no press officer within earshot. Like the previous *Momentum* and *The Door*, the album is something of a synthesis of Lacy's favoured settings, with the rumbustious energy of the group in "Number 1" filed next to the lyrics of "Prayer". Isn't it curious for a saxophonist, master of a vocal substitute, to be so involved in setting words to music?

"It's more than that, man. I've been into words all my life and I've always been fascinated by song and dance. It's the most normal thing in the world for me to work with and from texts. Jazz is about words. Word can be sound and sound can be word. It's indissoluble. The saxophone is just a machine, and the dream is what's happening, not the machine."

THERE IS another Lacy LP due, *Rusties*, on the New Sound Planet label, songs for sax, piano and voice. Does this conflict with his Novus output?

"My number one shot is for RCA. But there are other things they don't want. I have to be careful, though — in the old days, the company would go out of business, the record would go out of print, and I didn't have to worry about competing with myself. Some of those records were made at the wrong speed, anyway. I sound sour and boring. *Axieme*, the Italian solo record, it's about one-and-a-half tones flat and I sound awful. *Deadline*, with Ulrich Gumpert, that's about a pitch too slow. But people say, hey, I like that record!"

He shrugs. This year he will tour as much of the world as he's able, and let the records reach the rest. Last year, he visited the place in France where his saxophone reeds are made.

"They grow wild, like weeds, and it's said that when the wind blows, you can hear them wailing. Imagine that. Spending your life on a wailing weed."

*Anthem* is reviewed in *Soundcheck* this month.





ELEVENTH HOUR  
and SPEAKOUT present

# CROSSING THE BORDER

ON THE SOUTH BANK  
APRIL 1990

IN ASSOCIATION WITH WIRE MAGAZINE

**QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL**  
*The Knitting Factory European Tour*  
Seven shots of downtown New York City

- **MARC RIBOT's Rootless Cosmopolitans**
- **The JAZZ PASSENGERS**
- **MURRAY CLOSE**
- **MYRA MELFORD**

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EASTER MONDAY 16 APRIL at 7.45pm  
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## living in a no-zone lair

Ryuichi Sakamoto makes such raggle music that he's number

one in Japan - on the foreign chart. Biba Kopf reports on the

latest 'moto cycle madness.

THE MAN Without Qualities opens himself up to the world and lets it act upon him. His consciousness is a matrix for everything he experiences. As materials impress themselves upon him, so he slowly absorbs them into his amorphous self and shapes them into something recognizably his own.

It's a slow process, this gathering and seeding and sitting out lengthy periods of gestation. It might explain the long gaps between Ryuichi Sakamoto's releases. His new album *Beauty* follows on three years after the Bill Laswell-produced *Neo Geo*. But it's worth the wait. It's an exquisite work, crafted from an atlas of contemporary popular musics, a rich textural interweave of mutually alien instrumentations with mercifully little regard for their ethnic origins.

Authenticity, the guilt-ridden obsession of apologetic post-colonial western musicologists, is not a prime Sakamoto concern. Far from being driven by a Dr Livingstone complex to discover lost tribal rhythms, Sakamoto is attracted by music's surface qualities. His choices are purely musical. His native Japanese, African, Indonesian, Western pop - they're all up for grabs. Whatever his personal feelings about their original uses, they're only of working interest to Sakamoto insofar as he can interface them musically.

This is only right and proper. Further, his composing methods most accurately reflect contemporary experience. Music and travel in the modern world belong to the same bacillus culture. The bacillus, be it music or the traveller, passes through various cultures, simultaneously acting on and being acted upon by them for the duration of the passage. Just so Sakamoto's *Beauty*. His recognizable traits - techno austerity, stillness, gentle acoustic and electronic eddies - are deliciously scarred by West Coast rock, fuzzed punk, keening muslim wails. His list of collaborators, numbering among others, Youssou N'Dour, Arto Lindsay, Shankar, Robert Wyatt and Brian Wilson, clue in some sources.

"IT'S NOT necessary to understand backgrounds," asserts Ryuichi Sakamoto, struggling against the urge to sleep after being up for 23 hours straight working on a promo video. Exhaustion hasn't eaten into the good looks that secured his lucrative modelling work. On the contrary, at a boyishly handsome 38, new lines and flecks of grey etch his appearance with the authority his work commands.

"People were saying the same things in Japan at the time of punk," he laughs. "Serious people tell you, you have to understand the background, the social disease, being on the dole, punk as anger, something like that. Why not listen to it purely as music? It might be misunderstood, so what? It's OK. I like error. It leads to re-creation."

Growing up in postwar Japan, bombarded by western pop and its attendant values, is to live at the heart of bacillus culture. Ignoring the evidence, western ethnologists deplore the lack of "Japan-ness" in contemporary Japanese arts, when in reality "Japan-ness" is the acceptance and the turning round of bacillus culture. The son of a distinguished literary editor, Sakamoto majored in composition at Tokyo's University of Art. As it happens he later studied ethnic alongside electronic music. And all the time rock made itself felt.

Sakamoto placed himself at those intersections where the greatest number of musics are likely to pass through at any one time. As a member of the fabulous and phenomenally successful Yellow Magic Orchestra, he had a lot of fun playing with pan-oriental stereotypes. YMO dressed Chinese, incorporated ersatz Hollywood oriental motifs in their bizarre, beautiful techno-dances. They were as confusingly and exotically oriental at home as they were abroad. He has continued such cultural confusions through his solo work. His soundtrack for Nagisa Oshima's *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence*, in which he also acted, is a moving Satie-like meditation with added string colourings. Sakamoto is not so impressed by it, preferring his contributions to Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor*.

"I was surprised by people's reactions to *Mr Lawrence*," he avers. "I didn't know sentimentalism was so popular. Not with me. Some of *Merry Christmas* is very beautiful, I agree. The melody, the chord change, the sound, all beautiful, but... I really didn't know that sentimentalism had such a strong emotional function for people."

Nevertheless, pan-orientalism remains an evocative motif in his work. The most striking track on *Beauty* sets the melancholy, haunting Okinawan folk song "Chinsagu No Hana" in a wind-rustled marshland of (possibly sampled) strings. Being a small Japanese island under American occupation, but with its own music and language, it's as near and far from Japanese experience as it is from European.

"Even Japanese people might feel it is orientalism," smiles Sakamoto. "My music always comes from somewhere else. I like this position of being in the middle, between east and west, north and south, young and old. I like difference. I resist categorisation. I like to be in No Man's Land..."

A stranger in a strange land, which also happens to be his home. The peculiarities of the Japanese chart system have consecrated his stateless status. "There's two charts in Japan," explains Sakamoto. "A domestic chart and a foreign chart. *Beauty* has been number one in the foreign chart, selling 100,000 copies, because I'm signed to Virgin America."

"I am categorised as an American artist," laughs Sakamoto, this most un-American of Japanese composers.

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• Since last month's Wire advert, there has been a change of programme. The Brazilian guitar duo The Assad Brothers will now be joining Egberto Gismonti and his band on June 13, and the June 18 programme is now a double bill of Andy Sheppard/Nana Vasconcelos/Ernst Reijseger/Orphy Robinson, and the Bill Frisell Band.

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## new fusion

by Paul Gilroy

where the cultural entrepreneurs of London's informal economy hustle a living.

The established, overground jazz outliers are beginning to muscle in on this trend in an increasingly distasteful way. Many of them operate from a perspective which doesn't recognise this strand of black music as jazz anyway. This snobbery also minimises any ethical inhibitions that might arise from hawking the music at the obviously inflated prices which bring inevitable accusations of exploitation. Honest Jon's in Portobello Road have provided an honourable exception by refusing to contribute to the inflationary spiral which results in second hand copies of *Black Byrd* appearing in the racks for £40 with hardly vintage product from RAUL DI SOUZA, LUIS GASCA and AZYMUTH not far behind.

It's interesting to consider how these vital sounds and the sub-cultural economy in which they circulate have come to subsidise the mechanics of selling the reified sounds of 'real jazz' to swingers, traddies and boppers. This profiteering benefits neither producers nor consumers of the music, only the middle men.

Bright spurs in a dry month come from guitarists STEVE KHAN and DAVID T WALKER who operate at opposites of the fusion spectrum but are somehow united by their special delicacy of touch. Walker, best known for his contributions to Beverly Glen albums by Bobby Womack and Anita Baker, has produced a pleasant R&B-oriented album in *Akuma* (Half Moon, Japan). It features drummer James Gadsen, underrated trumpeter Oscar Brashear and arrangements by Jerry Peters. Khan's minimalist band Eyewitness was remarkable for a fine sequence of records propelled by the dynamic pairing of their leader's guitar with the ostentatious contrabass wizardry of Anthony Jackson. They sound less serious on *Public Access* (GRP), particularly since Steve Jordan has been replaced on the drum stool by the increasingly over-elaborate Dave Weckl. However, the quarter's stately version of "Dedicated To You", co-penned by Steve's lyricist father Sammy, is more than worth the price of admission.

## woke up this morning

by Mike Asheton

THE PACKAGE tour was invented long before the hotels on the Costa Del Sol were unfinished. In its original guise, the expression referred to a collection of hitmakers and hopefuls, with a backing band and perhaps a comedian, who would tour Britain playing a series of one-nighters. These tours, which always seemed to include Jess Conrad, declined in the late 60s as the old variety theatres on their circuit closed or fell down.

Blues package tours were more durable. In the 60s and into the early 70s, the annual American Folk Blues Festival criss-crossed this country and Western Europe, giving the emergent blues audience the opportunity to see artists who merited the over-worked epithet "legend", such as SONNY BOY WILLIAMSON and WILLIE DIXON. In the 70s, Birmingham promoter JIM SIMPSON continued the tradition, with his American Blues Legends tours. Some of the participants were less than legendary, but the first blues gig which this writer saw, the '73 Legends, boasted LACATINIAN SLIM, WHISPERING SMITH and HOMESICK JAMES *inter alia*. After 1979 even the diehard Simpson was unable to continue, and the era of the blues package seemed to be over.

But the dollar done fell since then, and last year the idea re-emerged in a modified form: rather than carting your artists around the country for a week, book one venue and present them in various permutations over several nights. 1989 saw the regrettably under-attended South Bank Festival, with an enterprising artist roster ranging from Deep South juke-joint to urban blues-rock, but the surprising runaway success of '89 was the Burnley Festival.

This year they're doing it again: the Second Burnley National Blues Festival takes place from 12-16 April, with a strong cast led by BUDDY GUY, now seemingly reborn as a great guitarist after years of uneven performances, and including the CAREY BELL Band from Chicago, blues lady ANGELA BROWN, singer LUCKY LOPEZ, and the immaculate British-based harp player JOHNNY MARS. Amongst the lesser-known names are the PAUL LAMB BAND, fronted by an excitingly aggressive harp player, and the Lancashire lads ATLANTA ROOTS.

Recently came news of a Gloucester Blues Festival, lasting from 13-16 April and starring CAREY BELL, LOUISIANA RED and OTIS GRAND'S DANCE KINGS, all of whom are also on the Burnley bill. So the package tour of yore has become the two-centre holiday. Long may it flourish. For information and bookings telephone 0282 30055 (Burnley) or 0452 505089 (Gloucester).



in  
a  
latin  
groove

by Sue Steward

PUERTO RICAN music is often overlooked, so a batch of recordings from the roots of the island's traditions is welcome. Harlequin's invaluable service of re-issuing the earliest recordings continues with *The Music of Puerto Rico 1921-49* (Interstate), which recreates the era of haunting string trios and quartets, led by men with glorious voices and names like El Canario (The Canary). The extraordinarily comprehensive sleeve notes and song translations with this series

add extra dimension to the music. PR music is generally more Spanish and sometimes Arabic than much Cuban music with its heavy African basis. The Spanish guitar and its PR derivative, the cuatro, with maracas, claves and occasional accordion and trumpet, creates sweet, melodic, deeply soulful music to sing on the porch. The richer, fuller voice of RAMIOT, alias Flor Morales Ramos, is my favourite: he isn't on Harlequin's record, but you can find his 40s recordings in some New York Latin music stores.

*Return On Wings Of Ploasare* (Rounder) is PR mountain music, played by Pedro Padilla's band: very Spanish guitar work and various local rhythms like the *seis*, *plena* and *aguinaldo*. Cuba's equivalents were *son* and *danzon*, featured on *Hot Dance Music From Cuba 1909-37* (Harlequin), from legends like TRIO MATAMOROS, SEPTATO NACIONAL and HABANARD and the 1937 female band of PAULINA ALVAREZ.

In the majors, RUBEN BLADES's *Live At The Roadstar Cafe* (Elektra) is a feast of re-arranged favourites, by his hottest line-up yet led by OSCAR HERNANDEZ (piano). Contains some breath-taking cutting contests between the percussionists and piano. One man who was entranced by the set was OSCAR HUQUELOS, author of the cult novel *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* (Hamish Hamilton), a vivid tale: sex and love and music and food and pain and despair, set in New York's Cuban music community, 1941-80s. To launch the book, Caliente/Charly are releasing Dave Hucker's mambo compilation and video, *Sounds of*, of mambos to get you in the mood.

On CBS, Miami's salsa-rocker WILLIE CALUNO brings more distinctive crossover delights on *Aguinaldo Del Caribe*, including a weird tribute to Chirino's heroes, "Yo Soy Un Tipo Tipico", coasting from Beatles to Blades to Roberto Torres to Hendrix to Led Zeppelin in one verse! That's not typical, though. This man deserves recognition here.

Live music: Cumbia band LOS CORALEROS DE MAJAGUAL (1-8 April), help launch Mango Records' Colombian albums, supported by London's LOS LLAS (Latin All Stars), who just secured a deal with Mango (finally, a major label acknowledges

home-grown talent). Also, to satisfy post-Gypsy Kings cravings, a lavish flamenco show, "Camino Flamenco", produced by MARIANO TORRES, lead dancer in last year's production of "Carmen", (Barbican, 28-29 March).

round up  
the  
usual  
suspects

by Bob Koff

FIRST, a few tentative words in praise of stupidity. To be genuinely stupid is to be unfettered by self-consciousness, uninhibited by conservative demands and free of restraints imposed by good taste. Great stupid art is low, gleeful, dispassionate, burlesque, often a gross parody of the great and the good, a courageously dumb refusal to accept how things work. But not everybody can be the Butthole Surfers. Some exceptionally stupid people, too stupid, even, to be Butthole Surfers, make the stupid mistake of thinking you can't be too stupid. Many of them record for ex-Surfer Kramer's New York-based Shimmydisc label. Though his own projects tend towards sublime uncatagorisable experimental rock (check BONGWATER's *Double Bassoon*), most Shimmydisc releases are just plain stupid. The stupid I can take, to be plain is inexcusable. In its combination of ill-judged puke humour and half-assed jazz-punk, KING MISSILE's *Mythic Shit* typifies a Shimmydisc release - often flat and inconsequential. But as hopeless ideas go, WHEN PEOPLE WERE SHORTER AND LIVED NEAR THE WATER's *Bobby LP* "tribute" to Bobby Goldsboro takes the cake. Hardly a cultural icon ripe for ribbing, WPWSALNTW's targeting of BG for the NY guitar noise custard-pie treatment is as pointless as it is unfunny.

In the marginal zones common to rock and the avant garde, trash is the kissin' cousin to stupid art. Though in the interests of research he's played at both, J.G. Thirlwell, a.k.a. FOETUS in all its bloody, blooming variations, is in essence kin to neither. The FOETUS INC. double compilation *Sink* (Self Immolation/Some Bizzare) traces a restless imagination triggered by its encounters with the difficult and the different, be it serial music or the American phenomenon of serial killers. Edited together by Thirlwell himself from various rare Foetus singles and compilation tracks, *Sink* is a welcome revision of a legend which was beginning to overshadow the extent of his purely musical accomplishments. Side two's 27-minute montage of minimalist, scattershot electro and trance repetition instrumentals is a specially compelling corrective to simplistic notions of Foetus as geek laureate.

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MEL LEWIS 1929-1990

*Michael Johnson pays tribute to the premier  
big band drummer, whom Stan Kenton  
used to call "our boy Melvin". Archive*

*photo by Bill Wagg*

MEL LEWIS never looked the part. Early in his career as Stan Kenton's drummer he could have passed for an accountancy student — earnest, fresh-faced, horn-rimmed spectacles, and a haircut straight out of the IBM dress code. In today's parlance, Mel Lewis (born Melvin Sokoloff) might have been mistaken for a nerd.

To unsuspecting listeners, the real Lewis exploded out of that humdrum exterior the moment Kenton would turn him loose for extended solos. After the applause and foot-stomping died down, Kenton liked to take the microphone and introduce Lewis by saying in a mock-effeminate, nasal voice, "So you liked that, did you? That was our boy Melvin."

To those of us in the American Midwest in 1955 who stood on the dance floor of a provincial amusement park listening to the Kenton band and his new drummer, it was excitement of an order previously unknown.

Lewis died in New York on 3 February at the age of 60, ravaged by cancer but spirited to the end. As recently as late November and early December, he had been in New Orleans with his orchestra. Each evening he would roll up in his wheelchair and sit in for a few numbers until his strength gave out. He told friends he wanted to keep playing as long as he could wield the sticks.

His death closes another era in the brief history of big band jazz creativity. Actually, the first blows had been dealt by the death of Thad Jones in 1986, and the passing of Village Vanguard owner Max Gordon in May of last year. The Vanguard had been the band's Monday night home, off and on, for 25 years.

Lewis earned his reputation as a young star with the jazz-orientated dance bands of the early 1950s, Boyd Raeburn, Alvino Ray, Tex Beneke and Ray Anthony. After "growing" professionally with Kenton, he moved on in 1957, floating in and out of Los Angeles groups led by Terry Gibbs, Bill Holman and Gerald Wilson.

His partnership with Thad Jones was hatched in Detroit in 1955, but took shape only after they ended up working together with Gerry Mulligan in the early 1960s. The Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Big Band was formed in 1965. When Jones withdrew in 1978, Lewis carried on, featuring much of Jones's written work. Arranger Bob Brookmeyer quotes a friend as saying, "Mel and Thad got a divorce, and Mel got the kids."

Their legacy is a large catalogue of recordings, several in CD, that capture the freedom and energy of their work. Jones's writing and arranging cover the waterfront from complex and difficult orchestrations to simple melody lines designed to showcase the soloists. Their recorded quarter work, so quiet and intimate, is distinguished by a high level of communication among the players — so well-honed that it sometimes resembles conversational exchanges among the players as they trade off musical ideas.

Lewis's strength was his musicality. Although he credits his initial success to his ability to hold the beat, he developed into one of the most "melodic" of drummers. This quality emerges clearly in his quartet work with Jones. More than a percussionist keeping time, he was able to support the group and, in solo breaks, create a recognizable melody line.

In full orchestra settings, the ebb and flow of his power was



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handled with a great technical control. "Most drummers say, 'Come on, come on'. They're pulling the beat. I get under a band, not on top of it," Lewis once said in an interview. The drum parts in the orchestral works were almost entirely improvised.

Oddly for a band leader, Lewis shunned the spotlight, almost apologizing for his occasional long solos. Instead, he borrowed Kenton's technique of focusing attention on his "boys", the soloists and section men he hired and welded together. The strick-twirling showmanship of the late Gene Krupa was anathema to him, although he admits that as a child the pizzazz of Krupa helped inspire him. "Then later on, I started listening to him. He wasn't doing anything different," Lewis once said.

The band is by now enough of an institution in New York

to carry on without Lewis. Recordings continue to sell, and the final CD, *The Definitive Thad Jones*, is now released. Meanwhile, the Vanguard remains a sort of "clubhouse" for the 17-piece orchestra, says club manager Jed Eisenmann.

Lewis's long illness allowed time for succession planning. A young drummer, Dennis Mackrel, had been substituting for Lewis for the past couple of years. And management of the organization devolves to trombonist John Mosca.

The band survives as a monument to Lewis and Jones. Jones's compositions and arrangements dominate the repertoire at the Vanguard on Monday nights. And Mackrel continues the Lewis tradition of under-the-band sensitivity. The "glue" that holds the band together after each loss of a principal is simply the love of the music, says Eisenmann. "It's so incredibly well-written and swinging."

michael Dorf

## the knits are getting bigger

Mark Sinker talks to Michael Dorf, co-owner of New York new music nesters, The Knitting Factory

IT'S ONLY been three years since The Knitting Factory opened its doors, 47 E Houston St, New York, New York, but that's still long enough for this intimate and enterprising little club to have earned entry into any history of significant New York undergrounds. Even so, hearing KF-bossman Michael Dorf recall — with wry amusement — his original, unformed, almost suicidally naive plan, you understand why he thinks luck was initially more important than planning:

"I wanted to open up a performance space where there'd be music Friday and Saturday night, Thursday night would be dance, Wednesdays poetry, Tuesdays film, Mondays performance art and anything goes. Like an Eastern European cafe, smoky, with a picture of Lenin up there, and everyone sipping cappuccinos, reading Sartre and hanging out. It just didn't work out that way."

Three years on, The Knitting Factory's host to a radio series aired on 210 stations across the US, and a group of artists are embarking on a 40-date European tour, purely on the strength of the club's name. Not the big draws, either, Zorn, Cecil Taylor or Blood, but lesser-known KF regulars.

"One of the things that I'm hoping will start happening is that people will start thinking of The Knitting Factory as this place of music, and different names will come up in their minds. And we can then put on a Festival, in London, say, in a year or two, just called The Knitting Factory Festival — and people will go, *Oh, yeah, that's that place where music is being made in the city of New York. I want to go. Who's playing?* And that's the second question."

His luck began when he booked Wayne Horvitz as a bar-pianist to play standards. After a week, Horvitz brought

along Butch Morris and Fred Frith. The next week Shelley Hirsch came too, and John Zorn was in the audience. After that, it clicked — The Knitting Factory attracted every disenfranchised mini-movement in New York, which by the late '80s meant everything that counted, from Feminist Improv to the Black Rock Coalition. Before KF, only the small non-profit spaces — PS 122, The Kitchen, Roulette, Dance Theatre Workshop, the Brooklyn Academy of Music — would cater to out players of the stature of Taylor or Beckett.

"The Knitting Factory isn't one scene, it's so many different scenes. That's one thing some people misunderstand. It's 35 musicians — or 50 or 70 — which could be construed as a scene, but it's really five or six very separate scenes. Which occasionally mix. And the only place where the mixture happens is at The Knitting Factory. We had a bartender marry one of our waitresses, and I know they met at The Knitting Factory. I'm responsible for their marriage. I love that. And when it happens musically, I get off on that too."

People go there to hear music, not to drink — no clink of plates and glasses or supperclub chat drowning the sound on-stage. They go there to be surprised: they might get gamelan, or a pedal-steel tribute to Albert Ayler, or Elliott Sharp and Blind Idiot God.

"I think what's working is not having a philosophy, not having any preconceived notions. So many people have these theories about what's good and that brings it all down. I don't know what's good. It's like wine-tasting — who cares if it's 1965 *Chateau de Bullebot*, if you like one over the other? If you like it, you like it. My mom wouldn't think Sonic Youth is good but I like 'em."

# CARLA BLEY

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## Shuffle Demons

LEEDS  
TRADES CLUB

RESPLENDENT in their hand-painted "Demon duds" the Shuffle Demons burst onto the stage and then process round the capacity audience, socking out their theme "Shuffle Monster". Cartoon hep-cats with the cracked conviction of five Harpo Marxes, they are watched in gobsmacked awe by hardened improvisation-heads, Tackhead-shirted rock fans and seven-year-olds alike.

Stich Wynston's furious drumming creates a turbulence that contrasts with the saxophones' daring modernity. He must be onto something, because the ensemble sound that results is so characteristic: falsetto and heated. George Koller plays electric bass with the requisite funky thumb-slaps, but he is also capable of walking lines and low moans that sound like an upright plucked or bowed. His solos, with vocal scats and Islamic falsettos and plain bad singing, could stand the attention given unaccompanied improvisations by the likes of Fred Frith and Alan Tomlinson.

However, the Leeds Jazz audience is singing along to "Funkin' Pumpkin", "a song about gardening in Canada" (the band seem to find their country of origin patently absurd). The jokes revolve around a core of serious saxophone development. What they play is admirably free of Berklee-school clichés, as pointedly as their outrageous suits. Perry White's solo on "Salt Peanuts" brought home

how frequently it is technical deficiency that makes bop half-baked and dull: his speed and abruptness was intoxicating. Rich Underhill's also is a real treat, with a hee-haw swinging-door post-Arthur Blythe attack, his ideas both raw and coherent. Dave Parker is a more relaxed player, but again it's so fresh it's as if boring jazz never existed. Together, they alternate big cliff-face chords and multi-directional outburst in the manner of the Hornweb or Windmill Sax Quartets.

In 1985 the Demon sax section encountered Xero Sling-shy. Underhill told from the stage how they had been "blown away" by his single alto when busking on the streets of Amsterdam. As a tribute to the departed maestro—whose combination of populism and avantgarde integrity ran parallel to the Demons—they played a respectful, jazz-oriented version of "Shove It", reminding everyone of what an excellent composer Matthew Coe was. It sounded like a bebop classic.

DEN WATSON

## Mike Westbrook Orchestra

LONDON  
THE ELECTRIC CINEMA

THREE SONGS into the show, Mike Westbrook stands up to make an announcement: "We've been playing songs from *Abbey Road*. This is our interpretation of that great album." And so it is, song by song, from beginning to end. Kate Westbrook takes the corny kiddie-ton numbers. Phil Manton brings his best barker's sex threat to the rest.

I like this idea because it's stupid. There's incoherent ambition behind it, beyond the Westbrook Ork's previous re-

clamations, which have been sensible and easily successful. But aside from scattered moments (Peter Whyman's delicious clarinet solo, an improvised New Vienna School-ish interlude), the project failed. The first verse of "Maxwell's Silver Hammer" had a certain unexpected menace—they gave it a neat Brecht-Weill twist—which they went on to dissipate without even noticing. Nothing else came close.

Jazz has never recovered from The Beatles. Having crashed through the barrier between high and low culture in its own way, leaving all such distinctions inoperable, it had to watch while four guys with funny accents came along and did the same, in an utterly unrelated and far more saleable way. Sometimes, as tonight, they actually like Beatles music, and want sincerely to celebrate it. But they still don't get it. Can it really be, they ask themselves, that smart, learned musicians—happy gambolling through pan-diatonic clusters and the pervasive moptop *Tutti Frutti*—cannot improve on something committed in ignorance by lippy kids with floppy haircuts and no manners?

And yet even Elvin Jones, with all his titanic drum mastery, couldn't elaborate on that patented Ringo dumbfuck rick-rick "rhythm" sound. An expert guitar-pasticheur like Brian Godding can replicate all aspects of Harrison's style except what matters—the wide-eyed *Wow Man!* pleasure at every simple harmonic discovery. Think of it this way. You're an intelligent, sensitive adult, with a solid musical—and political—reputation. How do you go about tackling a song that opens "Because the world is round/It turns us on?" Let alone "Come Together/Right Now/Over Me".

Because they were so BIG,

The Beatles ended up—for a while—meaning everything to everybody. Time passes; those meanings set hard, untranslatable from person to person. Beatles-music was the first I remember hearing. Every note of this LP, every chord's oddest voicing, is imprinted on my cortex, deep below adult language. So of course I love it, and its relentless pastel-creamy glibness. And occasionally, when the Westbrooks faked a harmony unused since 1969, it detonated a little starburst of nostalgia.

But reverence cloyes. The Westbrooks, decent people that they are, probably desired nothing more unhealthy than a romp through the music of their lost youth, on grownup terms. But the underflow of baffled resentment post-Beatles Pop still engenders in Real Musicians is signified at this level, rather than the tunes or the words. Rock as social fact (rather than influence): when missing the point produces something more important than grasping it might. Not tonight. Stupid. But never to the point.

MARK SINKER

## The Masters Of Disorientation

LONDON  
THE SESSIONS

WHETHER BY accident or design, this Masters Of Disorientation tour coincides with the reissue of the long unavailable first AMM LP. Twenty-five years down the road, just how far have AMM's three original members travelled since then? A fair answer might be that the MOD trio—so named to distinguish their activities from the present expanded AMM line-up—have circled back to square one, all the time picking up speed for the next

*East Angles Market's silver lantern during Alley Road. Photo by ANDREW POTHECARY.*



L	I	V	E
w	i	r	e
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great leap forward.

To hear *AMMUSIC* — 1966 now, on a CD that restores the improv sessions in their entirety, is to be drawn into the noisy debates of the day about the stuff of music, the aesthetic, political and economic meanings of total freedom in playing, and the strength of the collective. For the 74'25" seconds of its creation *AMMUSIC* seemingly irrevocably shattered the silence that passed for discussion about music. The sober lesson that followed is that silence sets in again as soon as the music stops. Ripping holes in the silence, only for them to close up as soon as you stop, is the disarming Sisyphus-like task the Masters Of Disorientation have taken over. Praise your Lord they do — for the duration of their two Sessions sessions, music is once more rescued from drowning.

The familiarity of their methods only serves to up the anticipation of the night's results, and the spectacle of Keith Rowe's systematic violations of his guitar is reward enough in itself. When he applies a plastic personal fan to his strings he raises his own Glenn Branca guitar orchestra, except his play of harmonics and their dissolutions is more subtle and inventive. And in playing much of the second set with a metal spring jammed in the strings, he sends out reverberating Sonic Youth-like squalls. Eddie Prevorse's responses, drawn from his mostly conventional drunkard, are endlessly resourceful. Whether he's bleeding half-tunes scraped out on metal or skin into the electric din or diverting the piece's organic flow

with massive rhythm shifts, his workrate is phenomenal. More recently rehabilitated in AMM company, Lou Gare doesn't always appear to be totally reconciled to their methods. Yet the time he spends building up to solos that never happen constructively pushes the work along.

Granted, MOD are going through the same methodical loops as AMM, with diminishing politico-economic impact, perhaps, but the music still spins off as ever unpredictable tangents, baffling silence long enough to earn another merciful reprieve.

BIBA KOPF

## Fayyaz Virji

YORK  
ARTS CENTRE

THE JAZZ Warriors' trombone-player takes to the road, leading a fusion-influenced sextet with South African connections. The right sort of South African connections of course — bass-player Ernest Motile and a book featuring Chris McGregor originals. Numbers like the enchanting "Djini", whose simple but affecting chord sequence provoked some lovely reflective playing from the leader.

The presence of guitarist Jim Mullen looked like a throwback to the most optimistic days of fusion. But Jim's beautiful ballad "Breathless" showed that he's moved on (or back) since the days of Morrissey-Mullen, and left you with a reason for getting hold of his new album, which it appears on. Ernest Motile was in contrast rather subdued — only one proper solo — and his acoustic bass was difficult to follow in the electric surroundings.

It was the irrepressible Ian Shaw who left the most

memorable mark. This young man has a remarkable jazz-through-soul singing voice, powerful and flexible, any reservations are conceptual not technical. Cut back a little on the constant power and heart-ache, forget about the doggy paddle arm-movements (not very expressive), and buy a new denim jacket that isn't several sizes too small would be my advice. Mr Shaw could build to a climax instead of starting with one. But on the evidence of one hearing, I'd say he's already one of the most remarkable singers on the British scene.

"Naturalised Citizen" (not an accidental title) showed the promise and the pitfalls of the band. One of several powerful compositions (I assume) by the leader, it cried out for release from a rock feel into a serious groove. The limitations of rock-rhythms (and maybe drummer Mark Parnell) . . . it doesn't mean a thing, remember. But affable Mr Virji is a fine, inventive player.

ANDY HAMILTON

## B Shops For The Poor/Peter Brötzmann

MANCHESTER  
MILLSTONE

IT'S A WHILE since I've been to a live performance of this type and the audience, if not the music, comes as something of a surprise. For one thing I wasn't expecting to spend the evening in the company of such a broad cross-section of Manchester's music lovers — Anarcho punks, thrash metal throwbacks, neo-jazzers, beards and mums; they were all there, as were, amazingly, several strays from the city's flares 'n' Kickers posers. What's more, they were there in bulk; upwards of 100 paying

customers shoehorned into a room that was intended to accommodate perhaps half that number.

Frankly I was shocked. Had I been taking those reports of single figure turn-outs for improvised concerts too literally? Must we now revise our opinion on the marginal appeal of German free jazz saxophonists? Are we witnessing the first stirrings of — Good Grief! — an Improvised Music Revival? I think we should be told.

The combination of Peter Brötzmann and B Shops For The Poor, the unwitting catalysts for this sudden existentialist panic, is one of those occasional meetings of sympathetic musical forces whose intentions are telegraphed way in advance of any actual performance. You think you know exactly how the music is going to sound and you're right. *Madness Gave*, *Last Exit*, *harmolodics*, *Frank Zapala*, *Captain Beefheart*; as the hour-long set progressed you could mark off the influences like a shopping list. This wouldn't matter much ordinarily, but when you're dealing with a branch of music whose first principle is its lack of premeditation then surely it defeats the object somewhat.

I'll admit to being impressed only by the on-stage demeanour of the various members of BSFTP. Individually or as a group they seemed totally nonplussed by having to perform their cacophonous, derivative free-jazz-rock fusion in the company of such a legend of musical extremes as Brötzmann. Intriguingly, rather than being given pride of place centre-stage, the saxophonist was shunted off into a corner by himself and denied the use of a microphone. As a result there were complaints from the audience that he couldn't be heard properly. This, at least, was unexpected.

TONY HERRINGTON

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# THE SONG OF THE HAWK

*The Life And Recordings  
Of Coleman Hawkins*

by John Chilton  
(Quartet, £20)

HAWKINS WAS the first great saxophone influence, long before Lester Young and Charlie Parker. Not only did these two have some of Hawk in their work (however much they also added) but so did Rollins, Coltrane, even Albert Ayler. In one of this book's many relevant quotations Thelonious Monk, a good example of the sort of younger musicians Hawk actively encouraged, says "Nobody can pick up a tenor sax without playing some of him".

Appropriately the mid-point of the book coincides with the mid-point of his almost 50 years' professional career, when in 1944 he became the father-figure of the beboppers – and their role-model, for he was probably also the earliest black hornman to be a "conscious artist". Highly competitive, he knew exactly what he was doing musically, but he also kept himself aloof from the general public and even from most of his colleagues, especially those who too obviously courted the public. "I know when a man is playing for money" was his pithy comment.

His privacy and self-containment, his disdain for interviewers, may explain why this is his first full-length biography. And they explain why up to 1934 (when Hawkins had basically only two employers, Mamie Smith and Fletcher Henderson) he tends to come across as the sum of his recorded solos. Beginning with his long European stay, the tone of the narrative is augmented by more personal insights. Chilton has uncovered a series of love-letters to a young British fan (leaving out the romantic details, however) and has contacted musicians and listeners who met him over 50 years ago. The focus is still firmly on the music, though, and virtually everyone important who played with him from then until his death in 1969 has something to say.

In addition, the author has apparently heard



everything Hawk ever recorded, and knows which albums deserve a tiny paragraph and which are worthy of a couple of pages. Thanks to this sense of perspective, we learn more about Hawkins's 1949 British visit than in Jim Godbolt's tendentious account, and more about most other aspects of the saxophonist's life than could have been reasonably expected.

Psychological theorising is thankfully non-existent, although it might almost have been welcome when discussing his final swift decline. Perhaps the song "Prisoner Of Love", which (contrary to Chilton) is the basis of Hawk's historic unaccompanied solo "Picasso", would have been a useful metaphor here.

BRIAN PRIESTLEY





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## a match of two halves

Ex-Lounge Lizards Roy Nathanson

and Curtis Fowlkes are the Yin and

Yang co-leaders of The Jazz

Passengers, currently spearheading

the Knitting Factory's European tour.

Gary Parker Chapin gets caught

between the Lower East Side juxta-

posers. Photos by Andrew Potuchary.

"CHARLIE PARKER and John Coltrane played more shit than any of us are ever going to play. I don't give a shit who you talk about." Roy Nathanson, co-leader and reedman for The Jazz Passengers, stirs his soup and continues, "What we are doing is juxtaposing information. Information that's available to us because all this shit has already been done. I mean, why can we play African music? Because we can hear records of African music. We know what the aborigines played. This stuff is all available."

Juxtaposition and dichotomy, that's the key to the Jazz Passengers experience. Disparate elements displayed in the light of each other, and, to an extent, synthesized. That's the basis behind their personal vision of jazz (mostly of the Mingus, AACM variety), mixed with blues, *merengue*, and Spike Jones excess. It starts right at the beginning, with Roy (38) and co-leader/trombonist Curtis Fowlkes (39), and extends into their most current projects. You don't even have to talk to Fowlkes or Nathanson to see it. Just look at them.

Nathanson is short, pale and mustachioed. He's got the crackling eyes and face of an anarchist. On stage he's always moving, either following a solo as it comes out of his own sax, or encouraging a compatriot ("Go man! Go!"). The guy just doesn't stop. Fowlkes, on the other hand, never seems to start. He stands there, just playing really good stuff. If you saw him walking down the street the word "loping" might come to mind. His perpetual state of repose is broken only when he forgets a lyric (an embarrassed "Oh shit!"), or when he smiles benignly at whatever happens to be funny.

Roy is the classic type-A personality, Curtis type-B. Roy thesis, Curtis anti-thesis. Roy the enthusiastic one, Curtis the laid back "calming influence".

Curtis' spin on this? "To Roy, you have to be pretty high-strung not to be a calming influence."

Roy? "Curt has a sort of final editing power. I'll come in and say, [frantic] *thavethisgreataidewejuxtaposethisandthisandthis*. And Curt will kind of put it in perspective. I'm manic and he's depressive, so together we make one person. It's a great working situation."

IT STARTED a few years ago when the two met in the pit of the Big Apple Circus (the real thing, animal acts and all). Later, as the 'second' horns in John Lurie's Lounge Lizards, they helped produce some of the most exciting music to come out of the East Village. When that began to drag creatively (Roy: "It was really John's band. Nothing we could control . . . in a democratic way"), the two decided to stretch out. So they formed a group along their own lines.

"We've got kind of a right-brain/left-brain thing going on in the Passengers," says Roy, "With the more intuitive players played against the more logical players."

Intuitive: that would be violinist Jim Nolet ("wild, wild soloist"), percussionist E.J. Rodriguez ("more of a colourist than a drummer"), and guitarist Marc Ribot, whose shipwreck and car-key solos really can "make anything sound good". Logical: that's bassist Brad Jones ("He's ridiculous! So lyrical, and incredible time") and vibist Bill Ware ("almost a straight bop player"), who anchors the Passengers much the way Bobby Hutcherson anchored Dolphy's *Out To Lunch* crowd.

So they've got a band, and a good one, too — Roy chorles "Bone, violin, and sax, there can't be a better front line than that!" — but what are Fowlkes and Nathanson trying to do with it?

Listen to either of their albums, *Broken Night*, *Red Light* or *Deranged And Dismayed* (both on Crepuscule), and you might get a clue. Both open up with the 'heavy' stuff. You move through Nathanson's out-ish compositions — Dolphyesque lines, unexpected accents, and nervous, crazy solos — in an off-kilter groove. Suddenly (and without warning) music-box rhythms, slightly off harmonies, and Curtis' oh-so-playful voice hit you with "Salty Tears" or "Do Nothing 'Til You Hear From Me" or some other chestnut. Curt plays it straight and sweet over Roy's less-than-serious chart, making you realize that *these* are the stone age saxophones of Guy Lombardo! Over in a few minutes. No synthesis, no segue, back to the swung-like-a-madman 'real' music. Then, just when you hope you're safe, guest vocalist Paolo Pace ("that rabbi from Rome . . .") does a gospel number with thick Mediterranean



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accents.

All of this, side by side, live and on record. What's the final result? Good music? Oh yeah! But it's also . . . *funny!* Even . . . bad taste! Curtis likes that.

"You *have* to approach bad taste. Traditional players never want to approach anything bordering on bad taste, but that may be where some humour is. And when I say bad taste I'm talking about . . . not looking cool for a moment because of the clumsiness that's involved with something funny."

Roy agrees, smiling, "It's really a different aesthetic. We're trying to do something that's powerful, psychologically and emotionally, but also playful. It's a different theme. I mean, cool is over. In this day and age, there's nothing to be cool about. People are dying."

Powerful stuff, but some folks are missing the point. The press in Boston and Vancouver, where the band toured last summer, has fallen in love with the Passengers, bestowing on them accolades just short of "the best band ever". Conversely, some of the same critics have suggested that Roy and Curt ease up on the more blunt attempts at comedy because of the barrier they pose to taking the band seriously.

"Maybe that's true," says Roy, "but comedy is as serious as anything. People are just going to have to write some different shit. They're going to have to get over it."

Still, the Next Big Project, an album for New World

Records, should be a tad more 'acceptable'. It will be the first Jazz Passengers album with any kind of distribution, thus it may have a large determining effect on the future of the band. Roy is aware of this, and admits, reluctantly, that they're going to play it a little straighter than he'd like.

"This next record will be a little funny. We're going to have funny shit on it, but mostly it will be real music. But then," his eyes light up, "there's The Play. We're going to do *The Jazz Passengers In Egypt!* It'll be Nathanson and Fowlkes, tailors to the pharaoh. And E.J. will be pharaoh, he'll be just this irritable Puerto Rican pharaoh. A lot of straight gag stuff, but beautiful stuff in the middle of that."

Sounds difficult, both artistically and financially. How solid is the deal?

Curtis: "It's pretty solid, except it hasn't been written. So I don't know if you can call it solid at all."

But Roy, the enthusiastic one, is undaunted. He's got a writer (Ray Dobbins, of *Bluefly* fame), and he believes in the project. "The Jazz Passengers playing this really strong modern music dressed in these Egyptian togas – it just looks so weird! It'll be great!"

Juxtaposition and dichotomy, yeah!

*The Jazz Passengers play at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall on 15 April.*

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Russell Luck reflects on the film scores of

Federico Fellini's favourite musical collaborator.

## arrivederci rota

Nino Rota. Cartoon by Mr 8½ himself

"Nino Rota, who wrote the music for Francis Ford Coppola's *'The Godfather'* and for nearly all of the films of the Italian director Federico Fellini, died yesterday in a Rome clinic. Mr Rota composed prodigiously and was known for the melodiousness of his music."

— The New York Times, 11 April 1979.

LOOKING OVER the many cartoons that Fellini drew of his numerous collaborators there seems one set apart from all others. The sketch depicts an oddly shrunken man stretched catatonically across a piano keyboard, his overlarge head a perfect dome — a Basilica of music: Maestro Nino Rota, who for more than three decades added his music to the cinema of others, enriching both. Rota was born in Milan in 1911 to a family of musicians. His mother Ernesta was a well-known concert pianist whilst his father was a prolific, if obscure, composer. Rota studied at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and whilst there met Stravinsky, a friendship which was to last a lifetime. Rota was undoubtedly Italy's most successful composer this century in commercial terms. He has a back catalogue of some 150 film scores, five operas and numerous orchestral pieces. Unfortunately, only a small fraction of his work is currently available in the UK.

Rota's music is nothing if not explicit. His trademark was the *ritornello*, a galloping rhythm bent upon eternal return. In Rota's hands, the *ritornello* becomes a precision tool with which to access the experience of passing time. Through his work with Fellini (probably the most celebrated of Rota's many collaborations with filmmakers), the composer helped to freeze in time a rich cavalcade of grotesques, the director's basic elements — archetypal characters, each with a precise musical signature. There are the embittered critic (*Otto E Mezzo*), the voluptuous American film star (*La Dolce Vita*), or the recurrent motif of the earth-mother figure throughout Fellini's "mid-

period" output (up to *Casamessa* in 1976). These and other character types do not so much come and go throughout the course of a film as *ebb and flow*. In this circus of personality Rota's music quite literally gives Fellini's characters their lives.

In *Amarcord* ("I Remember") Fellini weaves a spell of roughly one part memory, two parts invention around his childhood recollections of pre-war Rimini. Local characters seem to swell into universal figures, unjudged and unsentimentalised, caught in the full flow of life. Rota's arrangements give the piano keyboard a touchstone quality: it becomes a medium of interpolation, purveying fragments of melody with the easy appeal of a vaudeville song. A half-forgotten world is once again brought to the surface, to begin again its haunting.

One could say that Rota's music is unsophisticated, impaled upon the difference between child-like and childish. His themes linger on as linear transcripts of *ideas*, perhaps taken from reservoirs quite outside music. In Rota's emotional soundscapes, at least in those he constructed for cinema, there remains at the centre something unrealised. What he leaves to an audience watching a film such as *Amarcord* is a legacy of feelings that invite objects, the "props" of character and location. Almost as if the filmmaker is merely drawing dots between points in a story already given.

The relationship between Fellini and Rota was one of rare telepathy, of two minds artistically in step. Their working method varied considerably over a 28-year association. Sometimes the score would exist far in advance of the first day's filming, on others the music would be carefully sculpted over weeks or months in the darkness of the cutting rooms at Cinecittà in Rome. It would always arrive, however, in the same way, with Rota hunched trance-like over the piano,





tugging fragments of melody from the air.

ROTA DEALT in a music that was far more *about* nostalgia than it was nostalgic. His "Concerto For Strings" composed in 1964 for the I Musici performance group takes as its source of inspiration the formal divisions of a much earlier time; Preludio, Scherzo, Aria and Finale. Throughout is the repeated motif — lucid, enticing, above all harmonically direct. A precise watermark of mood and tempo, the Concerto brings to mind the writing of fellow countryman Italo Calvino whose translucent sentences shimmer with the same strange mix of innocence and omniscience. Where Calvino dealt with folk tales, focusing microscopically upon the *art* in storytelling, Rota adapted similarly traditional sources and made of them something uniquely his. *The Italian Straw Hat*, written early in Rota's career, allowed him to indulge his tastes for Italian popular opera, the music of Rossini and Donizetti. Like the very best of Rota's work the opera has an instant appeal: full of ironic instrumental passages and lovers' duets, it skilfully combines the comic with the lyrical. In a 1977 interview with *Newsweek*, a normally reclusive Rota gave some insight into his approach to music; "I like music that comes from somebody not nobody, but there is no neo-classic intention. I wrote it only for the pleasure of giving laughter. The deep moral of the whole thing is that we look far, far, far when what we seek is close to us. The opera is only fun, it doesn't have any moral . . . apparently."

A shared pleasure is shared knowledge. Rota was a populist composer, working primarily within a populist medium — cinema. Yet to make clear his art, Rota, in evoking the elaborate conceits of Fellini's films (specifically, the central metaphor of the circus or big parade) was obliged to take as his source music that was simplistic to the point of banality. His

real talent was to know what to leave out, a 20th century necessity. Rota's involvement with the cinema of someone like Fellini was to act as a translator, to take all that was difficult in Fellini's maze of images, and to make them simple, to universalise them to the point where they seem to meet our own memories. The device of the *ritornello* is perfect, functioning as the aural equivalent of an infinity of "present" moments passing before us and becoming the past. This is the logic of film and the central motif of Rota's music.

But there is something else in Rota's music which goes beyond all of this. It is the curiously double-edged quality of a music that at one and the same time seems to be an integral part of, and at the same time quite distinct from, the cinema it is deployed to illustrate. Despite offering up a range of vivid "signatures" that seem so fully integrated into what we are watching, Rota's music invites further speculations that are perhaps impossible to satisfy visually. Perhaps this was why Fellini confessed to such a deep suspicion of music, complaining that it confused and tortured him. Upon this limitation was built the basis of a mutual fascination that existed between the two men for nearly 30 years. Rota gave to Fellini's cinema the breath of atmosphere, of something indefinably exotic and other-worldly. It was his music that gave the filmmaker the ability to move away from storytelling conventions by permitting sweeping rhythmic shifts in time, place and sense. •

#### records by rota

Finding music by Nino Rota can be an expensive and time-consuming business. However, most of his soundtracks for Fellini are fairly easy to obtain on import through specialist soundtrack shops such as 58 Dean Street, W1. *Concerto For Strings* (Phillips), I Musici. *The Italian Straw Hat* (RCA Italia). *Fellini/Rota* (Silva Screen) (a fine compilation). *Chanson Pour Fellini* (Milan CD 329). *Anonymous Nino Rota* (Hannibal) (multi-artist tribute).

From Prime Time to

feeding time, Notting-

ham's Pinski Zoo are

snarling through the

bars at funk and free

jazz. Ben Watson gets

mauled by a harmolodic menagerie.

## caged beat

Zoo(m) shots by

Mel Yates.

OUTSIDE LONDON it seems easier to invent. The capital's musical promiscuity encourages an emphasis on individual talent that downplays new concepts of ensemble playing.

Pinski Zoo spring from the provinces, like the Hornweb Saxophone Quartet (whom Zoo resemble in their directness and individuality if not in their music). Over the last decade they, too, have found a new way to play music: they combine the cathartic emotionalism of late 60s free jazz with heavy funk.

Saxophonist Jan Kopinski was born in 1948 to a Polish father and a half-Irish mother and grew up in Nottingham, but he has never felt part of mainstream Britain.

"My father was a bomber pilot in the Polish air-force. I've got some terrific photos of him, in skis, leading a squadron of Polish air-men. He escaped and came over, joined the RAF. He was a lieutenant, used to fly the Lancasters."

When Jerzy Kopinski left (Jan was ten), his mother abandoned Roman Catholicism for an interest in Ancient Egypt that makes Courtney Pine's references to pyramids seem trivial (and a dress sense that predated the goths by 25 years).

"She listened to opera all the time. *Aida* was a big favourite, being Egyptian. Everything is based on symbolism to her. If it

belongs to Ancient Egypt it's good. If it belongs to a certain dynasty in Egypt it's bad.

"I remember always drawing things out of her books — Egyptian Pharaohs, Hemingway bull-fighters and Irish rebel sleeves, pictures of Black and Tan soldiers marching through Ireland. She used to walk around with peculiar make-up on, skulls hanging. After my dad left she couldn't care less what people thought. She'd take a snake out with her."

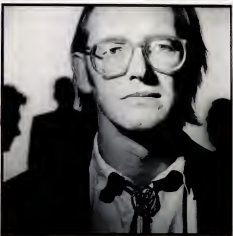
KOPINSKI'S FIRST musical enthusiasm was similarly exotic: he remembers playing an Yma Sumac record over and over.

"Yma Sumac was most peculiar, an Incan princess. She has this fantastic range — they reckon it's because she's from the Andes. It's glitzy music — Peruvian pop. She was supposed to sing notes that only dogs could hear."

The next revelation was Hendrix and Coltrane.

"Then there was the blues thing, which a lot of school kids got into and find very moving and all that. This is about '65, '66. There was a club called The Beachcomber and they'd get them all down there — Ike and Tina Turner, the Soul Sisters, Yardbirds, T-Bone Walker and Hendrix.

"In '66 I heard Coltrane. It's not until you hear things like



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Coltrane and Hendrix that you get that mysterious lift, like listening to Yma Sumac: this was unclassifiable music.

"I listened to Coltrane, Archie Shepp and Pharoah Sanders and Hendrix, didn't listen to jazz for ten years. I didn't go out. I'd practise in the cellar. I always saw the possibility of Hendrix in the setting of Coltrane or Coltrane in the setting of a power back-beat – I always saw that. That to me was fusion. I did go and see McLaughlin and that, but it was too finicky, a bit too classical."

At art college Kopinski pursued what he calls Cybernetics, a cross between systems theories and the kind of situationist critique of art-as-a-commodity that leads to political agitation. Kopinski's music has its roots in a fervently pursued debate on the place of art in society. Zoo music is not (like much of what passes for "jazz" in England) merely the work of music college graduates showing how well they can play. Music, though, came as a relief from the headaches of theory: he could just play to the records. The advent of Ornette Coleman's electric band Prime Time was another watershed.

"I went up there with Steve Lillie and Tim Bullock and it was a real affirmation, because we were getting a bit worried. People were always telling us that we sounded noisy, or that we couldn't play."

Kopinski manages to achieve the special sense of multi-activity in Ornette's bands. Coming to average fusion after the excitements of Ornette or Pinski Zoo is like sitting down at an Amstrad PC after jacking into cyberspace on a multi-user, multi-tasking operating system like Unix. Pinski Zoo do not, though, sound like Prime Time. Kopinski does not weave and bop like Ornette, favouring instead raw tenor smears that mingle anguish and demonic sparkle. He is forceful, yet smarts with feeling, tracing tail-offs with an assured blues approach reminiscent of David Murray (though probably both derive it independently from Albert Ayler).

For all the group, listening to John Coltrane was a revelation, yet none of them wanted to be involved with what they saw as the tame world of British jazz. They see creative jazz as a method that helps you deal with all kinds of influences.

"When Albert Ayler went to Europe he brought a fantastically highly-developed piece of music with him. What happened was that it really did spark up a relationship to folk music. It shows people that they can bring those folk musics back into their modern urban plane. It is like a teacher coming across and saying, You can use this kind of thing and use those kinds of folk musics, because they have nothing to do with inside and outside musics, they're people's music."

KOPINSKI WANTS to use the aspects of Polish culture that his father's nationality has opened up to him – East European folk music as well as the Polish composer Krystof Penderecki (used famously for *The Shining*'s soundtrack). Drummer Steve Harris admires Tony Oxley and Ronald Shannon Jackson, but remarks that the point is not to imitate them ("go to the clinic, buy the video"), but, say, to

hear the African drumming Shannon has absorbed – likewise with Max Roach and Elvin Jones. It is Ornette's openness to alien codes that interests the whole group.

Karl Wesley Bingham's funk bass is essential to the Zoo sound, driving but harmonically riotous. He was born in Nottingham in 1966 to Jamaican parents (a nurse and electrical engineer): there was always music at home.

"We used to all get together because we were a large family – there was nine of us. We all used to dress up and pretend we were the Jackson 5 – this is true! – and I was Michael Jackson. We used to perform concerts in front of our parents."

Bingham played bass and sang in church before being kicked out for some "trouble concerning some ladies". After that there was a local reggae band called Vision and a fusion outfit called WKBC. He used to check out Pinski Zoo.

"They used to play at this place called The Hearty Goodfellow in town, every Thursday. I used to get myself down there with two other members of the band and we used to really get into this thing because it was [Jamaican accent] *heavy music*, man! And then Jan got in touch with me."

"I used to have a good time with the Johnson Brothers. Listened to a lot of Ron Carter, Anthony Jackson – he's a session bass player – Paul Jackson, Stanley Clarke, not so much of the Mark King . . ."

Prime Time, again, was a revelation. After supporting Prime Time in Nottingham in 1987, Pinski Zoo went down to London and played with them. Bingham relates how Jamaaldeen Tacuma told him to "forget about the scales" – they found Ornette very open and friendly.

Harmolodics is notoriously hostile to the tempered scale. Ornette has not recorded with a piano since his debut in 1958. Steve Lillie, a founder Zoo member, was born in 1951 in a Leicestershire village, his father a commercial artist, "a very straight upbringing". His grandmother's piano fascinated him and he soon got lessons. He had a prodigious appetite for scores – everything got played.

"I used to play anything, work my way systematically through any books that came my way. There was always the music stool full of old standards, 'The Anniversary Waltz' and all that and the fox-trots with all the elaborate covers, 1920s, and religiousous gospel things, 'The Old Rugged Cross'. Beethoven, I went through quite a lot of his books, and Bach – preludes and fugues and stuff like that, Ravel, Beatles and Stones sheet music because we didn't have a record player."

Lillie has some of the woodshedded eccentricity that marks Cecil Taylor. His sense of harmony is also essential to Pinski Zoo's characteristic demented sound. The musicians have an ongoing discussion about harmony: Lillie practises scales continually and has developed "hand independence" to pile them on top of each other. Bingham says he ignores scales, but likes Lillie's "peculiar way of voicing". Kopinski has various twelve-tone and heptatonic scales he applies but says he does not think in terms of inside/outside.

Drummer Steve Harris, born in Mansfield in 1948, is a relative newcomer with only a year in the band (the others go

continued on page 46

## not waving but droning

*Drone of the drone La Monte Young once tried to find his piano a half of day.*

*David Iles closes the end with a modern music enigma — "father of minimalism".*

*writer of the world's longest-running composition and inspiration to such*

*artists as Terry Riley, Yoko Ono and Lou Reed. Photo by Hughes Rowan.*

"WHEN LA Monte Young says 'Take It From The Top', he means last Wednesday."

Everyone knows it, everyone quotes it — even those who have not actually made his musical acquaintance.

*Rolling Stone* scribe Robert Palmer coined his now-famous headline after La Monte's sound-and-light installation with his wife and longtime collaborator, singer and light sculptress Marian Zazeela at Gallerie Heiner Friedrich during the 70s.

*12 Day Blues* was precisely that, a blues progression taking 12 days to perform. It's only one of several pieces from La Monte Young's distinguished career to exploit great expanses of time. Gramavision's recording of La Monte's *Well Tuned Piano* provides some five hours of listening; a later public performance of this solo piano piece stretched to six hours 24 minutes.

If you believe, as La Monte does, that a piece of music can effectively be without beginning or end, then *The Four Dreams Of China*, composed and first performed in 1962 (one dream of which was most recently aired by Young's ensemble, The Theatre Of Eternal Brass, led by trumpeter Ben Neill) has been running now for some 28 years. Like his *Trio For Strings*, composed in 1958 and performed here last year during the Almeida Festival, *China* is made up of long sustained tones and silences.

"The silence preceding the concert stretched back as far as the silence which ended the previous performance of the same piece," he says. So in theory at least, *China* could go on forever, or at least until there's no one left to perform the piece.

THE 54-YEAR-OLD composer and musical strategist has been dubbed the "father of minimalism", not only by music journalists, but also by himself. If you compare him to

the household names of hardcore minimalism — Messrs Reich and Glass — or the younger composers like David Borden, Wim Mertens and Mikel Rouse who have emerged in their wake, the link seems a pretty tenuous one. Listen to Terry Riley's "Poppy Nogood" (from *A Rainbow In Curved Air*), more for its use of time and space than the actual mechanics which Riley employs, and the comparison starts to make sense.

In truth, La Monte's influence extends far wider than just the minimalist cache. Erstwhile students developed techniques pioneered by La Monte for their own musical ends: John Cale with the Velvet Underground; Jon Hassell with his Fourth World exercises (both with and without Brian Eno); violinist Tony Conrad, with an early 70s collaboration with German avant-rockers Faust; and La Monte's fellow Fluxus member Yoko Ono, with hubby John Lennon — viz *Life With The Lions*. And in a classic example of "chinese whispers", Lou Reed, having brushed shoulders with Cale back in the halcyon days of the Velvet Underground, gave us the unforgettable *Metal Machine Music*, four sides of raging electronic feedback which echoes some of La Monte's sonic principles (at the time of release, though, it was written off as a cheap, cynical move by Reed to get out of his recording contract with RCA).

La Monte himself readily acknowledges the parallels with Terry Riley's music. Yet he insists there are still inherent differences in their approaches.

"I'm more interested in these very subtle inter-relationships of rhythm where you move in and out of different, simultaneously existing rhythmic levels — like metres within metres."

He readily draws analogies with the blues. "The blues is one of my favourite forms; I've never been able to give it up. In general, the mode of blues is something like a raga. It's totally unique and different from the kinds of scales we had in



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Western classical music." At home in New York, La Monte is still given to singing the blues, collaborating with guitarist John Carter, though the duo has yet to perform publicly.

La Monte describes jazz as "a combination of blues and Western music. Say you listen to Sonny Steit playing very fast patterns, and then you listen to Mozart's melodies; you start to realise that Steit wouldn't have been running those kinds of patterns if there hadn't been some influence of Western classical music." Indeed it was jazz which marked La Monte's formal beginnings.

In the early 50s he studied at John Marshall High School in Los Angeles ("a real hothead of jazz intellectual activity"). Within days he'd struck up a rapport with a Dixieland band playing outside and often sat in with them before school. It was soon after Marshall that the young Young, then playing alto saxophone, auditioned for and won the second alto chair in the LA City College danceband, competing against Eric Dolphy (who was to become a firm friend both on and off the bandstand). There was also the inevitable round of sessions: amongst La Monte's horde of archive material on tape and acetate, there are recordings from the middle 50s featuring him alongside the likes of drummer Billy Higgins and trumpeter Don Cherry. He was clearly a disciple of the Cool school.

"Lester Young, Lee Konitz, Miles Davis, Stan Getz; one of the really important contributions these musicians made was an approach to playing which did not have vibrato. One of the great problems with the Western/European method of music performance is that it uses vibrato, and with vibrato you can never be perfectly in tune."

BY 1964 La Monte had all but discarded Western conventions of tuning. *The Well Tuned Piano*, which began life that same year, marked one of his first effective uses of "Just Intonation", a system of tuning an instrument to the harmonic series. In the case of *The Well Tuned Piano* each note conforms to "a rational harmonic of a single basic tone"; here it's a low E-flat, some five octaves out of the piano's range. Bridging the world of academicism into which he'd become immersed during the mid- to late-50s and his own developing sonic theories was an involvement with the (I think) rather dubious conceptual art movement, Fluxus.

La Monte, inspired in part by John Cage and his sidekick David Tudor, worked on a series of compositions which veered between oddball sound pieces (*Poem For Chairs, Tables And Benches* — or indeed anything which could be dragged across a floor) and brusque performance spectacles such as the illustrious *Compositions 1960 Nos 1-15* (in which the performer builds a fire [no 2], turns a butterfly loose into the audience [no 5] etc). One of the *Piano Pieces For David Tudor* (the best known) involves the piano being given a bale of hay and a bucket of water. "Of course I appreciated the humour when I wrote that piece," he says, "but what interested me most was the conceptual aspect as to whether the piano would actually eat or drink."

Emerging into the other side of La Monte's world you encounter something much more palatable and arresting: the drone-based improvisations of his Theatre Of Eternal Music (in which Young sang and played saxophone, his multiphonic runs predating a style which has now become synonymous with Evan Parker); the sine waves and singing which featured in his 'Dream House' installations around Europe and the US; and, of course, *The Well Tuned Piano*. With the latter, it wasn't until 1974 — some ten years after its conception — that he could effectively perform it.

*The Well Tuned Piano* isn't something you play every day. Not even La Monte manages that! His rehearsals for a public performance of the piece take weeks, where the music becomes one part of a whole approach to living, co-existing with the instrument, wooing it even.

When you do hear it, though, its length is somehow less imposing (though I've yet to play all ten sides of the Gramavision set at a complete stretch). Indeed it's entrancing. Only a piano, you think. But there's an entire orchestra under that lid; Young's means of exploiting the particular tonal qualities of this idiosyncratic tuning throw up cloudy overtones which hang in the air like a ghost-orchestra. Few achieve anything approaching a similar magnitude of sound: Terry Riley for sure, though he admits he learnt from La Monte's earliest recording of *The Well Tuned Piano* in 1964; possibly Keith Tippett too, although Tippett's mechanics and tunings rest with the orthodox.

WHEN LA MONTE talks about tunings, he sounds more like a scientist. His desired end, though, is the spiritual. And whether or not you think that it all amounts to little more than hippy gumbo, you have to admire his resoluteness.

"I just really want to be a conduit for this higher information, to let it flow through me, and I'm happy if people like it but I don't even hope for that as an immediate intention. What is important to me is that it is very pure, that it contains keys that unlock doors which allow people to have a new knowledge of universal structure."

Political activism is not his bag. "I felt it was necessary for me to be active in music rather than politics. I had to do something on a more organic and subtle level — that's what I felt I was created to do. I alone could never play things that I play in *The Well Tuned Piano*. It's all from a greater source." ■

#### Records

*The Black Record* (Edition X, Munich, released 1969), limited edition of 2,800 copies. Only a few are left, available from The MELA Foundation, 275 Church St, New York NY 10013, priced \$56.

*The Theatre Of Eternal Music: Dream House* (Shandar, 1973) deleted

*The Well Tuned Piano* (Gramavision, 1987).

*With Pandit Pran Nath: Raga Panjapuri Bero* (Shandar, 1971) deleted;

*Ragas Of Morning And Night* (Gramavision, 1986).

MY THANKS to Michael (mine of information) Gerzon for his generosity, enthusiasm and knowledge — an indispensable part of this article from the start.



going

lester young • bud powell

down slow

Round Midnight's Dale Turner was a composite of Lester Young and Bud

Powell in their declining years – but, despite similarities, Andy Hamilton

reckons the two jazz giants found very different ways to say their long

goodbyes. Lester Young photo by Daniel Filipacchi, courtesy of Val Wilmer.

SOMETIME IN 1952, Al Lion and Frank Wolff, directors of Blue Note records, visited pianist Bud Powell at his mother's home at Willow Grove, Pennsylvania. Lion recalled: "When Frank and I were leaving, it was late afternoon and the sun was dropping. There was a beautiful tree in front of the house. I asked Bud 'Isn't that called a willow tree?' He said yes and muttered 'Willow weep for me' a couple of times as he stared at the tree. I remember it felt like he was saying to the tree 'pray for me, please pray for me'."

By this time Bud's playing was no longer showing the fire and brilliance of his epochal late 1940s recordings. His soul was a tormented one and as the decade continued his periods of lucidity grew less and his spells in psychiatric institutions longer and more frequent.

In that same year of 1952, another founding figure of modern jazz was the nominal leader of a quintet of what his former colleague Jo Jones referred to caustically as "a bunch of high-school kids". Tenorist Lester Young too was, according to the critical consensus at least, in decline, revealing his growing dejection in a dispirited late style. It was this parallel

that led director Bernard Tavernier to unite the two musicians in the person of saxophonist Dale Turner, hero of the film *Round Midnight*. But the two artists coped with apparently declining powers in very different ways.

THE TRADITIONAL Lester Young Story has it that following his halcyon days with Basie and Billie Holiday, the traumatic army experiences (including ten months' detention for drug dependency) brought an abrupt change to Lester's style. But the change to a thicker, heavier tone and less buoyant style can be heard in a session with Nat Cole in 1943, before he was drafted. His first post-army recordings in 1945 (the famous Aladdin sessions) showed a magnificent return to form, and their small-group format set the pattern for Lester's later career. He led his own band (with trumpeter Jesse Drakes effectively in charge) or played as a single, and made his money working for Norman Granz's Jazz At The Philharmonic tours. None of these formats was ideal, but Lester was never assertive enough to dictate his artistic surroundings. However, *Lester*

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*Loops Again* (Affinity, 1948–51) and the Verve collection *Lester Swings* (1950–54) show him unintimidated by bebop, and admirably supported by John Lewis among others.

After the classic 1956 recordings (of which more later), Lester was in incontestable decline. Alcoholism and its side-effect malnutrition put him in hospital several times, and in 1958 he left his wife and children to move to the clubland centre of New York. The February 1958 session with Roy Eldridge, aptly issued as *Langdon's To Keep From Cryin'* (Verve), has Lester on clarinet for the first time since 1939. The pathetic, fluffy tone he squeezes out of the instrument on "They Can't Take That Away From Me" makes this last great musical statement all the more poignant. Later that year he was apparently planning an LP with Gil Evans. "He wanted to make the album, but he wanted to die more," said Gil (quoted in *Jazz – The Essential Companion*).

A trip to Paris, the city which seemed to hold out the prospect of recovery or at least stability for Bud Powell, at that same time sealed the fate of Lester Young. Away from the care of his New York friends, he drank much and ate little, made an unbearably sad recording (*In Paris* on Verve) and flew home just in time to die, in March 1959.

People say about Lester's playing that it often sounds sad and care-worn. It's true that the buoyancy which is so captivating on "Shoe Shine Boy" and other 30s recordings did not reappear in the 50s. Lester sounds sad, of course, because he *is* sad. An acutely sensitive man, the pressures of a society in which racial intolerance was endemic increasingly drove him within himself – to seek the limited and self-destructive solace of alcohol and marijuana.

But there was a further pressure that fell on him. In the 30s he needed to assert his cool, melodic style against the prevalent approach of Coleman Hawkins – warmer and harmonically florid. But by the 50s he'd been so successful that he now needed to preserve his individuality against a rising generation of admirers (Stan Getz, Wardell Gray, Zoot Sims, Paul Quinichette, Allen Eager . . .) Dave Gelly in his biography gives an interesting account of the distress this caused Lester. "When they come off and I go on, what can I play? Must I copy *them*?" he asked. And of Paul Quinichette, the so-called "Vice-Prez", "I don't know whether to play like me or Lady Q, because he's playing so much like me." When he was told that some other player "sounds just like you", he asked cheerlessly, "Then who am I?"

LEWIS PORTER'S wonderful musical biography *Lester Young* separates three style periods; 1936–42, 1943–50 and 1950–59. Only in the last is there the unevenness that results from Lester's physical and nervous decline. The key point Porter makes is that the changes in style were intentional. Lester's own testimony reinforces the evidence already afforded by the music for those prepared to listen. He said in a Paris interview "I try not to be a repeater-pencil," and explained, "I have developed my saxophone and play it, make it sound like that alto, make it sound like a tenor, make it sound like a *bass*,

and I'm not through working at it yet." He dismissed with characteristic profanity the critics who longed for a return to the old style: "Fuck what you played back in forty-nine, what the fuck you gonna play *today*, you dig?" (see *Wire* 26).

What we get in the later work is more oblique melodies and rhythmic abstraction. In the 50s, as Porter shows, Lester's phrases are shorter, with fewer long glissandos. The saxophonist's supreme musical intelligence was applied in the sparser idiom of the *Pres And Tadd* session on Verve and, even better, the four albums of live club material *In Washington DC* (Pablo), all from 1956. Here also is that "lagging behind the beat" that so upset some critics; however, it adds to the pathos of ballad numbers such as "I Cover The Waterfront", and these live dates provided some of the most relaxed and inventive work of Lester's career. As Lewis Porter says, "It would probably be better if one did not know the later works were by the same person, for then one could listen to them on their own terms." In contrast, Bud Powell in his later work is clearly so often trying, and failing, to recapture his earlier self. Less apparent technical fluency, more emotional depth – the later careers of the two artists do converge, but the developments underlying them were very different. With Bud the story is bleaker and more monochrome.

IT WAS between 1949 and 1951 that the bebop master cut two sets of recordings, for Alfred Lion at Blue Note and Norman Granz at Verve, which dazzled musicians and the jazz public alike, and set the seal on his role as the most influential modern jazz pianist. These recordings displayed standards of virtuosity that he was increasingly unable to command. An alleged beating by a policeman in 1945 assumed the kind of role in the Bud Powell Story that the army career did in Lester Young's. Committed to Pilgrim State Hospital on Long Island, it was reported that "he talked garrulously to all who would listen and was generally over-active" (see Ira Gitler's *Jazz Masters Of The Forties*). This was the first of many periods in mental hospitals (1947–49, 1951–53, and further spells up to his departure for Paris in 1959). He often received ECT, to little effect, and his behaviour became increasingly bizarre. Once he was observed at Birdland frantically rubbing his hands, apparently trying to remove the colour. At Minton's, on one occasion in the 50s, he rushed into the club where he was booked and began "playing" furiously on top of the keys until a bouncer threw him out. Alfred Lion later found him hiding under a car outside. Taken to Bellevue in 1951, he told doctors that people were trying to murder him.

These are clearly of a different order to the emotional troubles or neuroses most of us have suffered from at some time. Bud's behaviour in fact indicates a manic-depressive illness involving psychotic delusion and we can take with a pinch of salt the claims from a surprising variety of sources (Parker, Monk, Elmo Hope) that they "taught" Bud to "act crazy" so that he could cope better with the pressures on a black jazz musician. These pressures certainly added to the internal ones, though, and alcoholism and drug-dependence

where Bud's response to his desperate situation.

Yet without his illness he'd have been a very different pianist. If Lester Young was one of the supreme melodists of jazz, Bud Powell's playing had different virtues. As Teddy Charles said, "With Bud it was more an ingenious connection of scales and arpeggios, but the strength was not melodic." (Quoted in *Jazz Matters*.) At up-tempos he played with an intensity and frenzied insistence that are normally the preserve of horn-players — John Stevens commented that "he almost plays off the end of the piano". These qualities have been matched by one other pianist only — Cecil Taylor. Bud's virtues, unlike Lester's, could not be sustained without a lot of technical fluency. Inevitably his later playing is more "melodic", because he can't play so many fast runs (those that remain are often weak or fluffed). But it's not a natural virtue (it wasn't for John Coltrane either, but both artists produced strong melodic compositions).

This is not to say there isn't some fine work from the last decade. An amazingly free and lucid set from 1953 with Mingus and Roy Haynes — like Lester Young's Washington recordings, preserved by Bill Potts — shows where Bud might have gone if he'd been allowed (*Inner Fires* on Elektra). Instead, the clarity and attack go into decline. What does compensate on the excellent *Time Waits* (1958), the finest of the later LPs in the Blue Note series *The Amazing Bud Powell*, is the way

Bud transforms the then-fashionable funk and soul clichés into a powerful set of strong originals. But the pianist's later playing is always uneven. A stodgy set of recordings from his Scandinavian tour in 1962 (*Live At The Golden Circle* on Steeplechase) is followed by a live recording from the Café Montmartre three days later which is much crisper and more assured (*Boasting With Bud* on Jazz Masters).

If you've seen *Round Midnight* you'll know the concluding chapters of the Bud Powell story. He left for Paris in 1959 and became friends there with a young commercial artist, Francis Paudras, who helped him to become better-adjusted and to control his drinking. When Bud returned to New York in 1964 they were separated and Bud's health declined. He died from the effects of alcoholism two years later.

BUD POWELL and Lester Young were two troubled personalities who despite, and partly because of their troubles, produced great music. Bud's story is bleaker, a life out of control. In Lester's case we can see a different aspect. In the words of his sometime pianist Bobby Scott: "The uninitiated might think that what one saw in Pres was the defeat of the human spirit, or the surrender to alcoholism . . . I came to think his was the exquisite loneliness that comes of a splendid type of isolation . . . The peace that emanated from him was a glowing proof of a balanced personality."

• continued from page 37

#### Pinski Zoo

back a decade, though Bingham has had notorious sabbaticals to tour with Edwin Starr, Martha Reeves, Major Lance, Mary Wells etc). Apart from rock and soul bands he was in the punk band Amazon Blades whose guitarist Ben Mandelson (now in 3 Mustaphas 3) turned him on to free music. A member of the Oxford Improvisers' CoOp, he performed at several Bracknell Festivals with altoist Pete McPhail and drummer Matt Lewis before deciding that a consistent band — and rhythm — was what he really wanted. Pinski Zoo benefits from his experienced sense of openness as well as a Denardo-style violence (he is a hardcore fan).

Poised between the massive power of funk and the wild possibilities of atonality, Pinski Zoo represent an important current. Polydor's Acid Jazz compilations hinted at it, but the best tracks on those LPs were one-off stunts, not evidence of viable bands. Kopinski relishes "Punk Jazz" from New York. Paradoxically, it is the relative isolation of Nottingham that has put Pinski Zoo in an international context.

In Poland, in the wake of tours by both Prime Time and Pinski Zoo, there is Pick-Up, who label themselves "Free Funk Punk Harmolodic". In New York there is a group led by guitarist Jose Chalos, in LA the wonderful Universal Congress Of. Kopinski speaks approvingly of the German group Can. The Jazz Men Play The Blues. In England, Manchester acid is moving into improvisation with the house-harmolodics of

Those Who Celebrate: a Sheffield/Nottingham band called House & Dog plough a Zoo-like furrow of Slavic excess and freedom (this time with vocals). In Switzerland there is Kadash! (with Company-1989 attendee Co Streiff on sax). All these groups are producing populist, beat-oriented music that has ripped the harmonic straitjacket of conventional fusion to shreds. It is all that James Chance, Rip Rig & Panic and Xero Slingsby pointed to in the 80s. The record companies with clout that listen appear to be American — Enemy, SST. Pinski Zoo's superb new record *East Rail East* will appear on Jon Dabner's brave (but under-financed) Jazz Cafe Records.

A decade of work has put Pinski Zoo at the forefront of a movement that refutes the accusation that to like both Hendrix and Coltrane is to dabble in eclecticism. And about time too.

#### discography

- Introduce Me To The Doctor* . . . (Dispatch PATCH0001)
- The Dizzy Dance Record* (Dug Out PINS002)
- The City Can't Have It Back* (Dug Out PINS003)
- Live In Warsaw* (Poljazz PSJ-162)
- Speak* (Dug Out PINS005)
- Rare Bands* (Dug Out PINS006 or Jazz Cafe JCRCD903)
- East Rail East* (Jazz Cafe JCR)

See Soundcheck for a review of the new Zoo album.

*It doesn't do any LOUIS JORDAN? Photo by VAL WILMER.*



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**LEO SMITH  
PROCESSION OF THE GREAT  
ANCESTRY  
(Chief CD6)**

Recorded: Chicago, 28 February 1983.

*Blues: Jah Jah Is The Perfect Love, Procession Of The Great Ancestry, The Flower That Seeds The Earth; The Third World, Grains Of Pure Earth; Who Killed David Walker?; Celestial Sparks In The Sanctuary Of Redemption; Nara Light: The Prince Of Peace.*

Leo Smith (tr, flhn, kalimba, v), Bobby Naughton (vib), Joe Fonda (b), Kahil El Zabar (d, balafon, kalimba, perc). Plus Louisa Myers (g, tracks 1&5); Mchaka Uba (b, 1&5); John Powell (tr, 7).

It's SEVEN years since Bill Shoemaker, in his notes to the *Rastafari* LP, quoted Anthony Davis's comment that Leo Smith is "one of the unsung heroes of American music". There have been precious few chances to sing his praises since then: only two recordings, both released in 1986, both hard to find and both documenting the various stages of a transition (1982-85) in which, as he later told *Ear* magazine, "... the group began to introduce a music with a more obvious rhythmic implication. I began to adopt and mix some elements of reggae, some elements of funk and electric music ..."

Though Smith had long been a student of all musics, the decisive factor in these changes was his conversion to Rastafari, which, he said, prompted his use of song - and, presumably, more popular forms - in a desire to communicate his spiritual message more clearly. On the *Jah Music* cassette, recorded in 1984, the "rhythmic implication" is perhaps a bit too obvious: a heavy beat and wailing electric guitars create a few moments of visceral drama but overall the music feels claustrophobic and has an out-of-kilter awkwardness which recalls those late recordings on which Albert Ayler also tried to channel a spiritual message into popular forms. However, by 1985, when the first side of the *Hanan Rights* LP was recorded, Smith appeared to have found the right balance, mixing electric guitar and his winsome vocals with the elegant spaciousness of his earlier instrumental music. Then came four years of silence.

*Procession Of The Great Ancestry*, because it was recorded in 1983 (but not released until now), doesn't so much break that silence as make it speak all the louder, not least by reminding us that Leo Smith has been responsible for some of the most incandescently beautiful music of the last 25 years. The CD

catches him at the turning-point of his transition; in fact, it's mostly a valediction to his pre-Rastafari music, a last wander through those lovely, shimmering soundscapes he also conjured on LPs such as *Divine Love*, *Go In Numbers* and *Spirit Catcher*.

If anything, *Procession Of The Great Ancestry* rises to new, almost ethereal levels of gracefulness. This is a music of ritual and blues, of space and light; Smith's long trumpet tones hover like golden arcs over the quicksilver brilliance of Bobby Naughton's vibraphone and Kahil El Zabar's delicate trickles of percussive colour. Like his fellow AACM restructuralists, Smith handles silence, texture, dynamic with marvellous finesse, and though the music is steeped in respect for the tradition - the longer instrumental pieces are dedicated in turn to Miles Davis, Booker Little, Roy Eldridge,



Dizzy Gillespie - it is chiefly shaped by Smith's innovative concepts of "ahkreavention" and "rhythm unites", alternative methods of structuring improvisation which the trumpeter has been refining since the early 1970s.

Intimations of future change enter with "Blues: Jah Jah Is The Perfect Love" and "Who Killed David Walker?", two brief vocal/electric tracks whose attractive vigour anticipates the brightest colours of *Hanan Rights*. Still, it's the instrumental tracks which, for me, constitute the real splendour of *Procession Of The Great Ancestry* and make it one of Leo Smith's finest recordings. The spirituality they evince may be less specific than that of his Rasta songs (or of the poems in the accompanying booklet, written by Smith under his Rasta name of Wadada in 1988), but it is no less

palpable: you can hear it in the title-track's serene ceremonial, in the poised lyricism of "The Flower That Seeds The Earth", in the dignified exaltation of "Nuru Light: The Prince Of Peace" (for Martin Luther King). All confirm, moment by moment, Bill Shoemaker's contention that Smith "has chosen a course where aesthetic, political and spiritual dilgence are the ordering principles".

Given the rather different principles that operate in the American record industry, that choice is a measure of Leo Smith's heroism - and perhaps explains the scandalous lack of new recordings of his music. Whatever the reason, such a silence hurts us all.

GRAHAM LOCK

**STEVE WILLIAMSON  
A WALTZ FOR GRACE  
(Verve 843 088)**

Recorded: New York and London, no dates.

*Down Slant; Awakening, Groove Thang, How High The Bird*

Steve Williamson (ss, ts, as, perc); Hawni Gondwe (g); John Joseph (p); Gary Crosby (b); Mark Mondesir (d); Kevin Haynes (perc).

*Vivens, A Waltz For Grace-I, Sweet Come, Straight Ahead, Mandala, Synthesis, Hawni's Bird, Words Within Words.*

As above, except Dave Gilmore (g) and Lonnie Plaxico (b) replace Gondwe and Crosby. Abbey Lincoln (v-d) added.

FINALLY. It seems we've been waiting so long for Steve Williamson's full-fledged debut that expectations are ready to overflow - good company tactics, perhaps, although any record with messianic overtones has a lot to live up to. *A Waltz For Grace* comes in the manners of the staple modern debut LP: a cautious diversity of material, anchored around a cautiously diverse personality at its centre. The longest track clocks in under six minutes; all is acoustic, aside from the occasional guitar interludes and the brief snap with a drum machine on "Groove Thang", really quite an innocuous moment. Its appeal and stature depends on the playing of the leader, and on that point it's ...

Well, Williamson is obviously a potent talent. The gig I reviewed here three years ago (*Wire* 40) found him already in marvellous shape: as a saxophone technician, he must have very few peers in the UK. He gets a beautifully dark and grainy sound from the tenor, an elastic, snappy attack on alto and - perhaps most remarkably - manages to give the soprano



no an affecting, personal timbre. His poignant contributions on the title track are especially fine. In terms of the measure of his playing, even though he's put away the days when he'd blow the backside off "Mr P.C." for 20 minutes, he's not exactly left Coltrane in the cupboard. "Hummingbird" and "Straight Ahead" still find him feeding off the great man's methods, running arpeggios ragged while rocking back on the speared single note. The balance of the group, too, favours recall of the famous legacy – his most empathetic partner on the record is Mondesir, whose polyrhythmic crashing evokes the inevitable memory of Trane'n'Elvin.

The format of the session is different, nevertheless. The compositions are resolutely controlled, none allowed to outstay their welcome; they're also somewhat chilly in melodic terms, in the contemporary manner. It's as if these players were suspicious of sentimental tunes or mere hooks, and maybe they're right. It's certainly a trait shared by producer Steve Coleman, whose glossy, well-prepared sound is a surprising advance on the weak job he did on some of his own records. Williamson must feel a close affinity with Coleman – he even sounds like him on, say, "How High The Bird".

It's a serious record, something which never surrenders to eclecticism: even the concessionary vocal track, "A Waltz For Grace" itself, is justified by its status as the emotional core of the album. I'd like to hear the material expanded on the stage, and I'd be interested in the rhythmic directions he spoke about last month, because there's certainly no George Clinton in here. Just a very purposeful, strong, engaging first record.

MIKE FISHER

#### STEVE LACY ANTHEM

(RCA Novus PL 83079)

Recorded Paris, 27 & 28 June 1989

*Number 1; Prayer, JJ's Jazz, Prelude And Anthem.*  
Steve Lacy (ss), Steve Potts (ss, ss), Glen Ferris (tb); Bobby Few (p); Jean-Jacques Avenel (b); John Betsch (d); Sam Kelly (perc); Irene Aebi, Laverle (v).

STEVE LACY has a special place in the history of this magazine, which takes its name from one of his compositions. I'm therefore reluctant to say anything less than kind about his music in these pages, especially when he has said that he is very tired of listeners' lack of appreciation

and understanding of the way he uses voices. I am afraid I will have to add to his weariness, however, as I found the vocals the least enjoyable part of this album. They remind me of Kate Westbrook and Phil Minton – sincere and serious but forbidding – and if that's OK by you there need be no reservations about recommending *Anthem*.

Much of Lacy's life has been devoted to examining the music of Thelonious Monk: the Cecil Taylor group he worked in at the end of the 50s used a lot of Monk's material, and Gil Evans would feature Lacy on arrangements of pieces like "Straight, No Chaser". In the early 60s, Lacy's band with Roswell Rudd played only Thelonious tunes and in the late 80s there was the Monk project in which Lacy participated with Misha Mengelberg, George Lewis and others. Monk's spirit is most manifest in

delistam respectively. On "Prayer" Ferris cases in with a throaty, vocalised line which doesn't disturb the flow of the sung theme – indeed, grows naturally out of it – yet transforms it with real grace and warmth, qualities which Lacy's soprano also exhibits. As the man responsible for Coltrane's espousal of the soprano, and thus the epidemic which we are still living through, Lacy may have much to answer for, but his own playing disarms any criticism.

HARRY WITHERDEN

#### TRISTAN MURAIL GONDWANA; DESINTEGRATIONS; TIME AND AGAIN (Salabert SCD8902)

Recorded Paris, December 1980 and June 1987, Bremen, October 1986.

Orchestre National de France, Ensemble de l'Institut (both cond Yves Prin), Berthovenhalle Orchestra, Bonn (cond Karl Anton Ruckenstein)

IMAGES of landscape are strangely prevalent in contemporary orchestral music: is this the result of composers' (subconscious) contemplation of the densely-populated expanse of the orchestral stage? Or of the opportunity to concentrate on the minutiae of picturesque effects at the expense of the greater imaginative demands of "smaller-scale" composition? The latter seems to figure in these three (two orchestral) works of Tristan Murail – especially in the earliest of them, "Gondwana", named after a mythical sunken continent (and a real primeval one), which, despite showing a precise sense of orchestral sonority and a sometimes Ligetianesque command of complex yet transparent textures, is far less sharply characterised and formally adventurous than his smaller ensemble works such as "Ethers" and "Mémoire/Erosion" (both on SAPPHO 003, if you can find it).

The recent "Time and Again" (originally commissioned by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, underlining Murail's slightly misleading position in the UK as the best-known French composer of his generation), confronts fairly similar, if more fragmented, orchestral blocks and processes with an almost-solo synthesiser. Seemingly half-remembered quotations from Messiaen's *Tourangalla-Symphonie* periodically surface, unfortunate reminders of how much more memorable that work is than Murail's ultimately somewhat vapoury, expressively impover-



the downhill rotter of Lacy's "Number 1" theme and on his solo on "Prayer", which uses a clever paraphrase of the "Round Midnight" line.

After the ensemble, "Number 1" comes on like a long-lost cut from *Mingus Oh Yeah!*: Potts's thick-toned alto somehow manages to evoke the twin tenors of Kirk and Ervin, whilst Ferris Keenerprises bluesily. It's an impressive track, white-hot, with all the soloists forging simple but faultlessly constructed choesures. Few is incisive and powerful throughout the session, but nowhere more so than on this piece, and his work on "Prayer" and "Prelude And Anthem" seems to summarise the main shaping forces of Lacy's music.

The aforementioned vocals appear on "Prayer" and "Prelude And Anthem", settings of words by Delway Kienelly and Ossip Man-

ished constructions.

"Désintégrations" for 17 instruments and rape is a very different matter: the old and unresolved issues of combining live (acoustic) and recorded (electronic) music are approached here with confidence and freshness, showing the better side of Murail's all-pervading fascination with timbral gradations and transformations. Where the other two pieces are fuzzy-edged and perfunctory, "Désintégrations" is razor-sharp and vital, nearly every texture taking wing in ways prevented by the massive inertia of the full orchestra, and aided by an immeasurably better recording than elsewhere. Despite the unpromising title this is a work of considerable emotional power (within the generally dispassionate ambience of Murail's compositions) and a dramatic spontaneity belying the fact of half the music being "frozen" on tape.

RICHARD BARRETT

## PINSKI ZOO EAST RAIL EAST (JCR 904)

Recorded: Derby, Dec 89/Jan 90.

*Search Mode, Potlatch Boogie, Glamour Jungle, Race, Slip Drip, East Rail East, Friends Baby, Jams Quash, Later That Same Day, Safe House, Slat, Easy Attack*, (CD only: *Breze Bloch Brains, Race* (extended); *Friends Baby Too*).

Jan Kopinski (ss, as, ts); Steve Hille (ky); Karl Wesley Bingham (b); Steve Harris (d, elec perc).  
Collective personnel.

'SEARCH MODE' is a computer phrase, of course. And perhaps the oddest thing about PZ's unsung ten year mission through Harmonics, Coltrane, Penderecki and post-punk Jazz, is that they've arrived home in more-or-less parallel dock to Brooklyn's M-BASE crew. Sounds have their time, and this densely poised cyberfunk will belong – quite unexpectedly – to the 90s. Certainly, it makes more sense now than it did when they set out, and it isn't PZ that's changed.

Kopinski's horn bears as many traces of East European folk as more readable Free Jazz influences, but the fact that Hille and Bingham have been working with him for close to a decade means at least as much as the fact that he's the leader, Polish, and a minor master of

sobbingly blue sax melody. If Bingham's PZ's Jamaaladeen, then Hille's their Bernie Worrell, a master of percussive keyboard colour, but it's the group sound that signifies; always close-knit, it's now quite uncannily empathetic. On a fried little shuffle like "Potlatch Boogie", the beats simply don't exist separately.

Tunes sometimes bear resemblance to Ornette's space-pop; which is no bad thing. But what goes on between statement and close is clarified and messy rather than mystically messy – bass-lines flicker on bevelled edges, drums punch out laser-crisp metallic rattles and rolls, keyboards dart and dab. Even the songs which drift rather than drive are economic, the information's pared to the bone.

Being based in Nottingham had its downside. They've never been able to hook into the



★  
new rail east

advantages of Sryle Jazz Marketing. But their persistence has given them such a concentrated identity that if it had been possible to have this mass-appeal cake and still eat it with their creative integrity, we'd be hailing them as the UK's own Weather Report, with *Spark, Rare Breeds* and this as their golden age.

As it is, of course, each new LP has had to be received as if no one had yet heard of them – the similarities have been played up rather than the shifts, which is probably missing the point. In the tune that closes the LP, "Easy Attack", their confident familiarity with this their own unique terrain lets them decode an idea that combines Zawinul colour-wash with broody walking bass and a sharply strident bent. So precise it's almost shorthand, this is punk's gift to them, and theirs to us.

MARK SINKER

## JOHN SCOFIELD TIME ON MY HANDS (Blue Note B1 92894)

Recorded: New York, 19–21 November 1989.

*Wabash III; Some You Ask, So Say Me, Let's Say We Did; Flower Power, Stranger To The Light; Nocturnal Mission, Pharmacology*.

John Scofield (g); Joe Lovano (ts); Charlie Haden (b); Jack DeJohnette (d).

THE SHADOW of Monk falls softly over John Scofield's debut Blue Note album as leader. It may be a less arcane, less playful hue, but the spirit of the great pianist hangs over Scofield's fiercely lopsided yet brilliantly catchy melodies, over his strong, blues-rooted accents, and inspires the way the guitarist's considerable musical skill and understanding is distilled into compositions at once rhythmically and harmonically complex, yet beautifully economic and simple. The return to an acoustic setting and the way Joe Lovano's bruised tenor echoes the throaty physicality of Charlie Rouse's playing – both add to this ambience.

This is a Scofield reclaiming the glory of his late 70s acoustic work before, on his studio albums at least (eg *Land Jazz*), his compositions tended to get lost beneath a blanket of pop-fusion technology. All the tunes (apart from "Wabash III", which is a reworking) are new originals, most modal, and the wide-intervalled melodic lines played as one by guitar and tenor. Scofield plus Lovano is an inspired conjunction; Sco's instantly recognisable, smeared electric warmth being somehow more personalised by the natural breathiness and lustre of Lovano's style.

And the guitarist's soloing must be fast approaching the height of its powers. Unlike some of his contemporaries, Scofield cleverly avoids jazz-rock's Bermuda Triangle of licks, patterns and pyrotechnics. His improvisations can literally start anywhere; from the home territory of melodic reference and extension (no tunes are carelessly thrown away here), to his cheeky smugged reverberations and his rockish unfolding of long chordal passages which conjure up vivid images of the way he contorts his mouth around the notes when playing live.

Haden and DeJohnette are, of course, similarly commanding. On one of the album's strongest cuts, "Stranger To The Light", DeJohnette really stretches Scofield, firing rolls and cymbal salvos at him, forcing the guitar-

ist to respond with ever-climaxing originality. And as Lovano screams in after him as if already half-way through a freewheeling solo, Haden opens up the piece by changing his resonant walking bass lines to something entirely more unpredictable and teasingly arrhythmic, before rooting the music again in the head's jumping ostinato.

Recording quality is exemplary; the brightness, clarity and balance means that for once, for example, you can really hear the sharp business of DeJohnette's work. My only disappointment is that by being sent this music in a blank advance cassette and not within a contemporary Blue Note sleeve I was denied the opportunity of confirming or denying the vicious jazz rumour that, after 20 years with his old one, Charlie Haden has a new tweed jacket. That, however, is by the by.

John Scofield is building up a formidable body of work, especially compositionally, and *Time On My Hands* is, without doubt, his strongest release yet. "Since You Asked", "Let's Say We Did" and "Stranger To The Light" will be tomorrow's standards. A truly great record.

PHILIP WATSON

#### BENGT HALLBERG KIDDIN' ON THE KEYS (Dragon DRLP 170)

Recorded: Stockholm, 28-30 December 1959.  
*My Blue Heaven, Alone Together, Loveless Blues, Happiness Is Just A Thing Called Joe, One O'Clock Jump, Kitten On The Keys, Deep Purple, Moonlight In Vermont, Lazy River, Swingin' At The Kooroll, Squatty Roo.*  
Bengt Hallberg (p); Gunnar Johanson (b), Anders Burman (d).

#### LARS GULLIN THE GREAT LARS GULLIN VOL 5: DANNY'S DREAM AND MANCHESTER FOG (Dragon DRLP 181)

Recorded: Stockholm, 26 May 1954.  
*Danny's Dream, Be Careful, Igloo, Circus.*  
Lars Gullin (bb); Rolf Berg (g), Georg Riedel (b); Robert Edman (d).

Recorded: Stockholm, 26 January 1955.  
*Manchester Fog* (two takes), *Lars Metti Joffe, A La Carte, Solo.*  
As above except Bo Stoor (d) replaces Edman.

NEITHER of these records may be very familiar to British ears, but they number among the most renowned of Swedish jazz records, led by the two musicians who did more than anyone to bring international status to the Scandinavian scene. Hallberg was (and still is) a genuine individual among pianists who had to take on the bop vocabulary second-hand. His earliest recordings – he turns up on *Lee Kuntz In Sweden* (DRLP 18) and as a teenager on *Thore Joderly 1940-48* (DRLP 51) – suggest a Tristano leaning, but by the time of this set, recorded when he was 27, Hallberg had distilled a swing-based style. At mid-tempo, he can sound like an oblique Earl Hines, calmly developed his ideas while restlessly multiplying his phrases – as if constantly diverted by new ideas popping into his head. A tune such as "Lazy River" is skilfully shaded between zest

purpose than it is here. Riedel, Stoor and Edman offer sensitive support, but it's the fluency of Berg's guitar which is the icing on top, recalling the partnership of Billy Bauer with Lee Konitz. Dragon continue to perform priceless works with these fine reissues.

RICHARD COOK

#### MICHEL PETRUCCIANI MUSIC (Blue Note CDP 7 92563 2)

No recording details.  
*Looking Up, Memories Of Paris, My Bebop Tune, Brazilian Suite No 2, But, Lullaby, O Nana Oyi, Play Me, Happy Birthday Mr K, Thinking Of Wayne.*  
Michel Petruccianni (p, syn, v); Tania Maria (v); Anthony Jackson, Chris Walker, Andy McKee, Eskir Gomes (b); Lenny White, Victor Jones (d); Frank Colon (perc); Romero Lubambo (g); Gil Goldstein (sax); Adam Holzman, Robbo Kender (syn); Joe Lovano (as) (CD only). (Collective personnel.)

#### 100 HEARTS (The George Wein Collection CCD-43001)

Recorded: New York, 1983.  
*Yare Around, Three Forgotten Magic Words, Silence, St Thomas, Put Poem (A Madley), Some Day My Prince Will Come, All The Things You Are, A Child Is Born, Very Early, Put Poem Transitions, 100 Hearts.*  
Michel Petruccianni (p).

MOST of Petruccianni's albums have found him working within the relatively austere contexts of the piano trio or the solo performance. On *Miami*, though, the contribution of Tania Maria – who sings on only one track but takes credit throughout for "percussion arrangements" – has helped to place him in a more luxuriant framework. There is only one trio piece (the gratingly showy "My Bebop Tune"), and for the rest of the LP Petruccianni plays against a warm backdrop of synthesisers and shuffling Latin rhythms.

I sometimes think this is the kind of record you should pay twice the money for, because it can be used in two different ways. Turn it down low and you have superior muzak; turn it up high and you find that Petruccianni's lean, thorny improvisations are in no way compromised by their setting. "Bite" is a good example: it begins with a gorgeous wash of sound, in which the piano swaps a simple repeated



and meditation, and the two solo ballads, "Alone" and "Moonlight", are methodically explored yet packed with invention. And nobody can swing harder than he does in Johnny Hodges's "Squatty Roo", taken at headlong tempo. Altogether a scintillating record, adeptly remastered by Rune Persson.

The tracks collected on the fifth volume of Dragon's indispensable Lars Gullin series are a parallel achievement to Chaloff's *Blue Serge* – less hurtling, gentler, but as truthful to a jazz spirit as the American's music. The title pieces suggest a wistful fantasy on folkish themes, with the two takes of "Manchester Fog" embodying the tune as a boundless melodic line. "Igloo", "Circus" and "Soho" go at a fingersnapping pace but give the saxophonist no trouble – the baritone has never been handled with a more relaxed, inevitable

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phrase with Anthony Jackson's electric bass, but this phrase soon becomes the basis for a frantically intelligent and free-form solo. Here as elsewhere Petruccianni shows his characteristic gift for generating excitement by nagging away at the same melodic figure over and over with slightly varying accents.

It's a consistently tuneful record, never more so than on "Memories Of Paris", where he has the cheek both to sound like Michel Legrand and to include an accented in the arrangement. As usual, he gets away with it. My favourite track is "Thinking Of Wayne", a waltz which remains predominantly tough and spiky while still allowing space for Joe Lovano to blow a heady, lyrical soprano solo. For some reason it's only available on the CD – leaving the LP with a stringy running time of less than 37 minutes.

Meanwhile one of Petruccianni's earliest albums gets a CD reissue: *100 Hearts* is a solo set from 1983, similar to *Magic* in its dense inventiveness but light years away in terms of ambience. He turns in a muscular, swinging blues on Coleman's "Turn Around" and does something like justice to Charlie Haden's noble "Silence", but the stand-out tune on this collection is again Petruccianni's own: "100 Hearts" is a little masterpiece of repetition, full of tiny ingenuities despite being anchored obsessively to its tonal centre of D major. It's the work of an outstandingly brainy and energetic musician, whose music now seems to be getting brighter, breezier and even more accessible without any noticeable loss of edge.

JONATHAN COR

#### DEREK BAILEY & BARRE PHILLIPS FIGURING (Incus CD005)

Recorded: London, 12 May 1987; Crawley, 4 September 1988.  
*Who's There? I Know That You Passed In Around; You'll Find My Theory Is Logically Sound, Don't Say; 100 Years From Today.*  
Derek Bailey (g); Barre Phillips (b).

HALF RECORDED during Company Week 1987 and half in the following year's Crawley Festival, this is one of those improvised sessions that yields its true richness only upon repeated attempts to break through the forbiddingly resilient surface of its sound-world.

Bailey in particular is on decidedly nagging

form; although his catalytic abilities and sense of contribution to a larger entity are in constant evidence in his larger group work, I find his spiky asceticism can pale quickly when it's as exposed as here. Particularly as Barre Phillips is often at pains to create a sympathetic space for the guitar, opportunities which seem often to be filled by more of the same barbed-wire texture of harmonics and crabbed, knotted chords, the same diligent avoidance of anything virtuosic.

Phillips has much more to offer in the way of timbral sophistication and is more prepared to depart from the solemnity of Bailey's approach, without ever losing touch with the tortuously unfolding duo relationships. His agility with and without the bow contrasts sharply with Bailey's consummate maladroitness, his fluency with every obscure corner of



technique and colour with the guitarist's obsessively monochromatic activity. Naturally, Phillips's playing often has a (more or less elliptical) harmonic implication, and if on the one hand he's able to insinuate himself effortlessly into the crevices of Bailey's playing at its least pitch-oriented, there are also points when he seems to draw the guitar within a specifically chordal area, or even (eg six minutes into track three) into something suspiciously like lyricism.

What is happening in terms of the responsiveness of duo playing is nearly always something special, and truly felicitous sound-combinations frequently congeal as though despite themselves. If we assume that Bailey knows exactly what he's about, and actually likes his instrument to sound like that, then the superficial difficulties here begin to look

more like a challenge to listen to the flux of ideas beyond the sounds; the sheer amount of musical thinking going on is staggering – more to savour and unravel than in many supposedly close-knit and laboriously-considered scores.

RICHARD BARRETT

#### BERNARD PARMEGIANI LA CREATION DU MONDE (INA CD 1002 HM 90) Realised at ORTF Paris, 1982-4.

BERNARD PARMEGIANI is the most important and influential figure to have emerged from Pierre Schaeffer's stable of composers at French Radio. His ambitious electronic compositions – "Violobriest", "De Naturum Sonorum" and "Le Tables De Matieres" – rank alongside the major electronic works of Xenakis and Stockhausen. With the possible exception of Stockhausen, Parmegiani has done more than any other post-war composer to establish electronic music as a self-sufficient medium capable of an almost symphonic breadth of expression.

His work from the early 60s represents an impressive fusion of the idioms of *musique concrète* and electronic music, predating Stockhausen's synthesis of the two styles in "Hymnen" by several years. Parmegiani uses an immense variety of sound sources – electronic, concrete and instrumental – but these elements are blended together with such subtlety that the effect is one of continual mutation within a single sound continuum. This aspect of his work has exerted considerable influence on a whole generation of electro-acoustic composers, ranging from Jacques Lejeune in France to Trevor Wishart and Dennis Smalley in England. He has remained an obscure figure in this country due to the lack of availability of recordings on the INA label – a fate he has shared with Francois Bayle, Lejeune, Francois Maché and other exponents of *musique concrète*.

Anyone listening to Parmegiani's music for the first time is likely to be struck by its extraordinary capacity to evoke visual images; in listening to *La Creation Du Monde* one inevitably thinks of lightning bolts shooting through space, meteor showers and cosmic thunder. Parmegiani has for many years directed audio/visual research at the ORTF studio and his music appeals strongly to the visual imagination. In early works (such as "Le

Tables De Matieres") he creates a surrealistic aural perspective by bringing familiar sounds into incongruous juxtaposition – bees, rain, church bells, thunder. The sounds are in a continual state of metamorphosis.

The opening section of *La Création Du Monde* ("Moins L'infini") creates a hybrid texture of metallic scintillations and watery resonances; after the machine-like sounds (reminiscent of early *musique concrète*) which initiate this section the sounds become progressively more ethereal in character, drawing the listener irresistibly into Parmegiani's sound world. Many of the sounds in *La Création* have been computer-generated but are far from synthetic in character; one has the impression of gigantic sound sculptures made from unknown materials or of actual physical processes – as if one could hear the movement of molecules in the air or the internal stresses of matter. The impression is both one of physicality and of mystery and strangeness.

*La Création* is Parmegiani's most recent large-scale composition; running to almost 20 minutes it is his most ambitious work to date and is sufficiently inventive to sustain its epic scale. The only major work by Parmegiani to have appeared on CD to date, it is essential listening.

ROGER SUTHERLAND

#### ALEX CLINE THE LAMP AND THE STAR (ECM 1372)

Recorded: Los Angeles, September 1987.  
*A Blue Robe In The Distance; Emotions; Emerald Light; Altar Stone; Accepting The Challenge.*  
Aina Kemsiris (v), Jeff Gauthier (vn, vla, v), Hank Roberts (cln, v), Wayne Peet (p, org); Eric von Essen (b), Alex Cline (perc, v), Nels Cline (v), Susan Rawcliffe (didjyudu).

Some LPs seek to grasp your attention from the first bar, but Alex Cline is obviously not one for the sledgehammer approach. When the volume control is up high, one and a half minutes have ticked by on the CD and you still haven't managed to hear a sound, you know that you're listening to a record which intends to unfold its beauties slowly. But hang on in there, because they're worth waiting for.

*The Lamp And The Star* follows on from the records which four of these musicians (Gauthier, von Essen and the two Clines) have been

putting out under the name of Quartet Music. Its spacious, glacial landscape is dominated by wordless female voices and the sparse but satisfying string section of Gauthier and Roberts. Eclectic and sensuous by turns, the music shifts and unsettles, allowing solos to drift in and out so that the lines of demarcation between composition and improvisation are never clear. Occasionally the interplay between piano and voice reminded me of Azimuth, but the approach is a good deal freer, and Cline's melodies are ghost-like where Taylor's were warm and welcoming.

The three shorter tracks are carefully shaped, with a sense of ideas being held in reserve. Of the longer ones, "A Blue Robe In The Distance" passes through some demanding mood changes until it comes to rest on a ravishing violin solo over Wayne Peet's steady-



ly shimmering piano; "Altar Stone", meanwhile, contains the most frenetic passage, a long improvised dialogue between percussion and cello. Roberts (who listeners will probably recognise from Bill Frisell's band) is at his most versatile here, sawing away at the upper register one minute and then, on "Accepting The Challenge", bringing rapt concentration to bear on a slow, melancholy theme which recalls Carla Bley's "Jesus Maria".

This kind of range is typical of an album which manages to subsume an astonishing variety of detail into an overall sound which remains utterly unique and consistent. Why this set should have taken more than two years to reach the shops is a mystery: for anyone who has the patience to make it, an outstandingly beautiful journey lies in store.

JONATHAN COXE

#### LOUIS JORDAN AND THE TYMPANY FIVE LIVE JIVE (A Touch of Magic CD DATOM4)

No recording details given.

*Chee Chee Ch Boogie; First Guy's Named Moe; Buzz Me; Knock Me A Kiss; On The Sunny Side Of The Street; All For The Love Of Lil; Safe, Same And Single; Broke But Happy; Tossie And Pacific; Let The Good Times Roll; The Drappy Drappin'; I Like Em For Little Thats; Don't Let The Sun Catch You Crying; How Long Must I Wait For You; Daddy O; Jumping At The Jukebox; Baby That's Alright For You (Married Woman Blues).*  
No personnel listed.

#### LOUIS JORDAN I BELIEVE IN MUSIC (Black And Blue CD 59.0592)

Recorded: Paris, 6 November 1973.

*It's A Low Down Dirty Shame; Three Handed Woman; Hard Head; I Believe In Music; Every Knock Is A Boon; Caldonia; Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby?; Saturday Night Fish Fry; I'm Gonna Move To The Outskirts Of Town; Red Top; Take The A Train; Grooving In Paris I; Grooving In Paris II; Something For Fred; Something For Louis.*

Louis Jordan (as, v); Irv Cox (ts), Duke Burrell (p), Louis Myers (g), John Duke, Dave Myers (b); Archie Taylor, Fred Below (d).

LOUIS JORDAN made James Brown possible and Elvis Presley necessary. He was the first modern black performer to cross over from the world of jazz into the world of pop, transforming both musical domains by bringing rhythm and blues into a new relationship with each other. He was also the first to be able to span the divergent expectations of black and white audiences. The first black American to dabble in Caribbean styles and thereby contribute to the hybrid pre-history of reggae; the first whose career was built through pioneering use of film in marketing him nationwide across Afro-America.

The explanation for his unprecedented success lies only partly in the explosive music of Jordan's Tympany Five. His fiery alto playing and the band's consistently dynamic arrangements came gift-wrapped in an innovative, even revolutionary black style. Jordan's theatrics celebrated and refined the self-consciousness of a new community of hip, black city-dwellers. His use of their special vernacular language and the characteristic low-

down and dirty humour of his numerous hit records became an important index of that growing population's continuing progress from plantation to ghetto, slave ship to citizenship.

Neither of these discs does anything like justice to Jordan's fulsome talents or his historical significance. It's nice to have his music in this format and *Lav Jav* would have been a useful reference but too many key recordings are omitted. An uncredited band gives enthusiastic but scarcely classic renderings of some of his better-known material. The recording is of a surprisingly high quality and the ambience of the original performance has been retained along with the affirmative force of Louis' personality.

*I Believe In Music* was recorded in France shortly before Jordan's death. It is valuable mainly for the welcome spotlight it throws on his horn playing. He gets to stretch out on the large number of instrumental tracks included and his solos demonstrate precisely what younger players like Eddie Harris or Maceo Parker took from his playing to create their own distinctive musical voices. One obvious outtake, "Something For Fred", is a curious if not alienating excursion into out-and-out funk that forces the listener to confront the continuity of his music with the dance styles that followed it.

PAUL GILROY

## ANTHONY BRAXTON

19 [SOLO] COMPOSITIONS, 1988  
(New Albion Records NA023CD)

Recorded: Cambridge Massachusetts, 8 April 1988  
138A, 106D; 118F; 138B; 118A; 138C, 77C; 26F;  
*You Go To My Head*, 11911 + 99E; *Round Boat*  
*Midnight*, 99B; 106A.

Recorded: San Francisco, 16 April 1988.  
138D, *Half Nelson*, 106C.  
Anthony Braxton (sax).

As the title indicates, this unaccompanied alto sax recital consists of *compositions*. Braxton improvises, but likes to plan ahead. His pieces concentrate on various aspects of saxophone playing (trills, smears, multiphonics etc). There are also three standards. The usual distinction between improvisation and composition seems irrelevant when someone plays with such startling authority.

Anthony Braxton is a devastating alto player. His *For Alto* of 1968, his first unaccompanied recording, is still shocking: explosive,

angry and lyrical, it showed what a single instrument can do (a lesson well heeded by European improvisers). Here some of the playing is unbelievable. "118A" sounds like two saxophones, so skilful is the use of freak notes.

"77C" has a soft commentary underlying ripping bursts which is unearthly. On "26F" you could swear the notes overlap each other. "106A" explores micro-tones, a keening, drunken line that builds to an expressionist climax: designer-Ayler. Whatever the techniques, Braxton's streamlined velocity gives everything a chrome finish that is chillingly futurist. The better tracks (generally the longer ones) develop an urgent physicality. Anyone calling Braxton "cerebral" after listening to "Half Nelson" — all gulps of air and strangled figures — should have their head examined.

Occasionally, though, it sounds merely



academic, as if Braxton's strict delineation of techniques means that we are being presented with exercises. His lowering spookiness and lost atonality suddenly seem predictable. You long for a Cocteau-like twist, something odd, to reassure us that Braxton is still with us. Because when he is with us, it is a blast.

BEN WATSON

## MAARTEN ALTENA

QUOT  
(hat ART CD 6029)

Recorded: Amsterdam, 5-7 December 1988.  
Pony, 88; *Roscoe Boulevard*; *Rails*; *Braden*, *Vaux*;  
*Admiral*; *Scene Rurale*; *Quot*.  
Maarten Moore (sa, cl, bcl), Peter van Bergen (ts, bcl); Marc Charig (t), Walter Wiebos (tb), Maarten ten Hoorn (vnx), Michiel Scheen (pk), Maarten Altena (b); Michael Vatcher (perc, cls).

## ORKEST DE VOLHARDING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER (Volharding 007 / Babel 8953-6)

Recorded: Amsterdam, September 1989.

*Remoté Place*; *Cookin' Girl*; *Praxits*; *Mikroskup*; *Shoulder To Shoulder*.

Bob Driessen (ss, bs), Rutger van Otterloo (as, bs); Maarten van Noorden (ts, ss), Dill Engelhard (f, pcc); Anita van Soest, Rijkje Dorresteyn, Louis Lanting (t); Willem van Manen, Johan de Meij, Hans Visser. Toon van Ulzen, Henk Umels (tb); Jasp Derksen (p); Sjeng Schupp (b). (Collective personnel).

News from the Netherlands, in densely packed reports. Both albums are composer-led, and whilst the concept of the solo, with its implications of the centrality of improvisation, is not entirely absent, it is definitely relegated to a specific and subsidiary role where it exists in these performances.

Woven into this is another strand, spun from adaptations of that concert music which derives from the European classical tradition; the use of clarified techniques to define the scope of composition, whilst relying finally and heavily on the *ensemble* sensibilities of jazz performers finally to denote that unique intensity of exposition.

Yet there are major differences between the two albums. Altena has gone for a small-ensemble tradition. There are references to Stravinsky in the notes, particularly "A Soldier's Tale" (though there are earlier echoes of "Petroushka" on "Rails") but on something like "Voices", with its hot-pointillist tenor and percussion, or the dense textures of "Quot", there's at least as much an echo of Mingus. As composer-instrumentalist-leader he tends to be unobtrusive but distinctly in control, though there's some strenuous bowing on "Quot". Six tracks are by the octet; four, including the fascinating "Punt", which sets ten Hoorn's probing violin against a staccato counterpoint dominated by Wiebos's sardonic trombone, are by a quartet filled out by Moore, drawn from the larger group. Five of the pieces were written by Altena, two by ten Hoorn; only two come from outside the group: Gene Carl's fascinating "Roscoe Boulevard", and Gullius van Bergijk's somewhat desolate "Scene Rurale". Both of these offer variety within a set essentially dominated by the concept of the *autour*.

The Volharding band plays it more co-operatively and to a larger format. "Mikros-

coop" (by van Manen) and "Cookie Girl" (by van Norden) come from inside, as it were, but the other three tracks are the work of composers outside the orchestra. The importance of the writing needs to be acknowledged – and they're given greater prominence in the billing than the musicians – so let's hear it for Martijn Paddig ("Remote Places"), Amílcar Vasquez Dias ("Pranto"), and Steve Martland ("Shoulder To Shoulder") as well as van Manen and van Norden.

The influence of the concert platform is clear, but shouldn't be overestimated. Paddig's piece, for instance, finds Berio roped in by the annotator for justification, but one can hear more easily the over-clotted textures of Michael Mantler in the days of the JCO finally written through into a highly-disciplined clarity, whilst "Cookie Girl" recalls much more Bill Russo than its alleged Gershwin antecedents. Perhaps "Pranto", with its knife-edge trumpet trio opening and swooning finale, defines what's going on most precisely. Right, it's concert music, but it's also written for a classic jazz big-band line-up – apart from the drummer, which does make a hell of a difference, actually – and it's played in the old tradition too, with all the warmth, interdependence and precision of the classic era. The structures that emerge on "Millecoccop", for instance, may be in compositional terms a world away from Basie's "April in Paris" (although not quite so far removed from late-period Thad Jones) but the way they're played, with all that easy warmth and casual grandeur, posits an intricate relationship one to the other, and clearly indicates where the music comes from, even if where it's going is another matter entirely.

But let's be careful here: let's not say that the Volharding disc points the way to a whole new future for the classic instrumentation of the big jazz band in the hands of composers of skill and integrity; let's just note the existence of that possibility. Even that's exciting enough.

JACK COOKE

## AMM

AMMmusic 1966  
(ReR AMMCD)

Recorded: London, June 1966.

Later During A Flaming Riviera Sunset, Later During A Flaming Riviera Sunset (LP version), *Autumn*

*Glendolus; In The Realm Of Nothing Whatever; After Rapidly Carving The Plaza; After Rapidly Carving The Plaza (LP version); What Is There In Unlabeled To Coast You Dream?; Silence.*  
Cornelius Cardew (p, clo, transistor radio), Lou Gare (ss, vn), Keith Rowe (g, transistor radio), Lawrence Sheriff (clo, acc, cl, transistor radio), Eddie Prevost (perc).

Thus CD is a serious can of worms. Leaving aside the desirability of re-releasing anything at all on CD when the capacity could go towards releasing other, new material; leaving aside also the desirability of re-releasing analogue material on digital software, this is possibly the first attempt to manipulate the programming capacity of the CD player as an inherent aspect of a particular recording's reproduction, an idea which Michael Gerzon



expands upon at length in the current *Re Records* quarterly magazine. The idea is that, given the CD player's capacity for playing any tracks in any order, taking this factor into account when composing music for recorded CD would result in a form of user-variable music unique to the medium. This AMM material makes inroads into this area by allowing the listener to select only the original edited versions which appeared on the long-deleted AMM Elektra LP of 1967, or to hear the longer versions not previously available. The final track – ten seconds of silence – can be programmed to provide just that anywhere in the listening sequence.

AMM's totally interactive soundworld has been carefully documented in literature accompanying recordings and in magazines such as this one, but whether or not enthusiasts will be

prepared to interact with the music in this way, this is a fundamentally essential recording, which goes more towards demonstrating the group's subsequent influence than any other material they've released. Above all, though, despite the charges of self-absorbed introversion which have been fired at AMM at every stage in the group's history, this music somehow exudes goodwill. The extended timespans are more to do with accommodation than attenuation; the persistent explorations of single sound-sources are curiously investigative rather than doggedly determined and the entirely unselfconscious use of unconventional playing non-techniques has a freshness undeplored by the fact that this music was improvised nearly a quarter of a century ago.

Anyone who does or doesn't have the original LP will want to experience this chapter in AMM's history. The text of the accompanying booklet combines valuable insights with a kind of cumulative bewilderment at the group's continuing ability to surprise its members, demonstrating AMM music to be a mode of behaviour which, thankfully, most of them are still working on. And, to paraphrase an early quote, they still don't mind people listening.

TOM CORBIN

GERI ALLEN, CHARLIE HADEN,  
PAUL MOTIAN  
SEGMENTS  
(DIW-833)

Recorded, New York, 6-8 April 1989.

*Last Year; You'll Never Know; Marmaduke; Cebola (Draw Music); Home, I'm All Smiles; Segment; La Passione, Rain.*

Geri Allen (p), Charlie Haden (b), Paul Motian (d)

STYLISTICALLY, where does Geri Allen come from? There's something of Andrew Hill and, through him, Bill Evans. But the most important direction seems to be from Paul Bley. The same angular lyricism, the unobvious lines that would be quirky if they weren't so beautiful, the result fresh and refreshing. Geri's opening line on "Marmaduke" is almost pure Bley, for instance. Like him, she operates with an enhanced, though maybe less extreme, appreciation of dissonance that challenges our dulled and jaded ears. (*Years might be – Ed*)

With Haden and Motian she's formed the *fin de siècle* equivalent of the Bill Evans Trio



with its ideal of collective improvisation. Of course, Motian was in the original, but in the freedom that has come with maturity his playing has taken on many of the qualities of Geri Allen's. It's Haden whose ultra-cool and less angular lines provide the stable, more conservative reference-point for the trio.

Together they've produced a fair crop of albums now. *Etudes* (reviewed *Wire* 62) set high standards which *Segments* lives up to, even exceeds. Two ballads – the little-played Harry Warren song "You'll Never Know" and the beautiful "I'm All Smiles" – are featured together with the Parker originals "Marmaduke" and "Segment" (the dark misterioso jive from 1949). "La Pasionaria" is one of Charlie's liberation pieces, a tribute in *memoria* to the Communist heroine of the Spanish Civil War. Geri Allen's original "Rain" makes a sweet close to a lovely set.

ANDY HAMILTON

#### BUDDY COLLETTE FLUTE TALK (Soul Note 121 165)

Recorded: Milan, 4–5 July 1988.

*Magali, Blues In Torrance, Richmond In Acropolis, It's You, Crystal, Andre, Flute Talk, Rosamunda*  
Buddy Collette (as, cl, fl), James Newton (ff); Geri Allen (p); Jaribu Shahid (b), Giuseppino Prim (d).

#### RALPH PETERSON TRIANGULAR (Blue Note BI-92750)

Recorded: New York, 21–22 August 1988.

*Boncha Swing, Triangular, Water Color, Precious; Just You Just Me, Move, Splash, Smoke Rings*  
Geri Allen (p); Esir Okon Esset (b); Phil Bowler (b, fl); Ralph Peterson (d).

THE NUMBER of records including Geri Allen in the personnel which we've heard of late tempts one to use that word "overexposed", though it wouldn't be fair: even six record dates might be just a week's work. As a sideman, though, I'm not sure how effective Allen really is. I seem to hear a rapid streak in

her playing that leads the lightest moments on a record such as *Twilight* into mere fluff, and her work on these two albums is sometimes disappointingly insubstantial; she often flirts with ideas rather than coming up with something decisive, and resorts to rhapsodising when stuck for an idea. There's an interesting moment in "Richmond In Acropolis" where, after the prettiness of the flutes playing the grave, old-world theme, Allen's portentous solo aims to sustain the mood and suggests only reworked cliché.

She has a more central role in *Triangular*, though I have to say that this isn't a record I enjoyed very much. Not quite the extra-shiny cod of neo-classicism, but there's an air of overplaying the hand which makes the music seem chilly. "Move" gets a nice updating, and I suppose the military beat granted to "Bem-

chamberish bebop, vaguely like a Tristano date. Newton keeps a low profile, in keeping with a session that probably could have done with someone letting off a rocket or two.

MIKE FISH

#### JOHNNY HODGES THE COMPLETE JOHNNY HODGES SESSIONS 1951–1955 (Mosaic MR6 126)

Recorded: NYC, LA and San Francisco, between 15 January 1951 and 8 September 1955. 62 tracks played by 13 different line-ups; not listed for reasons of space.

THERE ARE not many non-macho male role-models in popular culture. The first ones I came across were black soul singers such as Smokey Robinson, Curtis Mayfield and Al Green, whose on-record persona – conveyed largely through the *sound* of the voice – made it clear that such qualities as delicacy and gentleness could be a central part of a masculine sensibility. Johnny Hodges is their jazz equivalent. He blew the loveliest alto sax you've ever heard. His tone, said Duke Ellington, was "so beautiful it sometimes brought tears to the eyes"; critic Ralph J. Gleason wrote of its "sunlight and beauty". Humphrey Lytton claimed, "He could cast a spell with one note."

This box is full of spells; a six-LP set, handsomely packaged by Mosaic, which collects together all of the small-group sessions which Hodges made in his one temporary absence from the Ellington orchestra. Cornelius "Johnny" Hodges (aka "Rabbit", "Jeep" and "Squatty Roo") was born in 1907, joined Duke Ellington in 1928 and remained with the orchestra, except for one brief interlude, until his death from a heart attack 42 years later. That exception was a five-year period, 1951–1955, when Hodges led his own small group and recorded several sessions for Norman Granz's Norgran label (later reissued on Verve). There are 61 masters included here (plus one alternate take of "The Jeep Is Jumpin'"), recorded at 13 different sessions and featuring what was essentially Hodges's working group of the time – usually a septet of alto, tenor, trumpet, trombone, piano, bass,



sha. "Swing" will strike some as an interesting novelty. But the originals are all very rapid, unrealised creations, and as sturdily as Allen plays, there's a discursive quality to virtually every track. Peterson is simply too busy to lend the music any kind of swing, which is a mouldy kind of criticism, but one difficult to avoid.

Much of *Flute Talk* recalls the sort of sessions which Bud Shank and Bob Cooper did in the 50s. Collette plays well in the company of a group that was actually being led by Newton. It would have been better if we'd heard more of Buddy's clarinet: on flute he's more a fine technician than an imaginative player, and his alto has the inconsistent fire of someone who probably doesn't play the instrument that often. The uptempo tracks – "It's You" is maybe the best example – have an air of exotic,

drums. (Not included are a 1952 Al Hibbler date, on which Hodges led the orchestra, nor the altoist's various appearances with the JATP All-Stars.)

Though he'd just left the Duke, Ellington's influence is all over these records. Trombonist Lawrence Brown, who'd left the band with Hodges, plays on all 62 tracks, while other Ducal alumni who appear include Shorty Baker, Harry Carney, Sonny Greer, Jimmy Hamilton, Al Sears, Billy Strayhorn, Clark Terry and Ben Webster. The material features many of Ellington's best-known tunes — "Sophisticated Lady", "I Got It Bad", "Come Sunday", "In A Mellow Tone", "Don't Get Around Much Any More", "Warm Valley", "Mood Indigo" and others — as well as several of Hodges's own compositions and a fair sprinkling of blues and ballads. In fact, blues is as pervasive a presence as Ellington. Many of the blues here are taken at what Stanley Dance, in his excellent notes, characterises as "a relaxed, sauntering tempo of a kind almost peculiar to Hodges", though the punchy riffing and shuffle rhythms of other tracks reflect the early 50s' taste for R&B. ("No Use Kicking" is a supreme example of the former style; "Castle Rock", appropriately a big hit, demonstrates the latter.)

To all of the above Hodges brings an elegance and buoyancy that gladden the soul. There seems to be almost no ego in his playing; no unnecessary notes, nothing showy or brash or fanciful: just a stream of supple, lilting phrases, beautifully balanced and unfailingly melodic. To pick a few personal favourites: "Blues Fantasia", "My Reward", "Day Dream", "I Got It Bad" and "A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing" epitomise grace at slower tempos; while "Sweeping The Blues Away", "Through The Night", "Rose Room", "Sunny Side Of The Street" and the unexpected kwela inflections of "Skokiaan" are breezy strolls with an irresistible spring in the step. Not to overlook the other players — check out Ben Webster's toe-curling chorus on "Jappa", Shorty Baker's tender growls on "Sweet As Bear Meat" and, in many places, Emmett Berry's swashbuckling trumpet, the incredible versatility of Lawrence Brown, the skilful prompting of Leroy Lovett and Billy Strayhorn... As you can see, it's hard to avoid resorting to lists of superlatives.

Longeurs do crop up occasionally. There are two lengthy ballad medleys, a format whose appeal eludes me (though I wouldn't want to

miss Harry Carney's baritone slithering all over "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes"), and a couple of the blues perhaps stroll on a little too long. Still, you'd have to be an obsessive nit-picker to find fault with this collection and Hodges is undeniably magnificent throughout, his poise and invention unflagging over the 12 sides. There are a lot of expensive box-sets around at the moment, but this one is an essential purchase. The music has stood the test of time for 40 years and I bet they'll still be listening to it in another 140. This Rabbit will run and run.

GRAHAM LOCK

Available from specialist shops or from Mosaic Records, 35 Melrose Place, Stamford, Connecticut 06904, USA.



#### **BLUE BOX CAPTURED DANCE FLOOR (Tiptoe CD 888 801)**

Recorded: Cologne, 23–26 June & 15–16 October 1988.

*Peppermint Mobile, Dreamless Night, Little Prince, Nervous, Going, Dance Floor, Cross Cross, Cheri, Thumbs Up, Sambo, Cartoon.*

Reiner Winerichladen (t); Alois Kott (b, ky, v); Peter Eisold (d, perc, acc, box).

#### **JACK WALRATH WHOLLY TRINITY (Muse/Vogue 600612)**

Recorded: New York, 15 March & 1 April 1986.

*Spherus; The Last Remains Off I Can't Get Started, Kissin' Babies, I'm The Pit, Baby, You Move Too Fast, Spontaneous.*

Jack Walrath (t); Chip Jackson (b); Jimmy Madison (d).

WALRATH'S BLUE Note albums have offered some enjoyably baroque hard bop, but *Wholly Trinity* is different, striking stuff. Trumpet, bass and drums is an unusual combination: Walrath, Jackson and Madison fire up somewhere between the Paul Smoker Trio and the Smith/Kowald/Sommer group, spinning out of the leader's off-kilter tunes into some pinballing improv. It's a beautifully recorded set: Walrath's horn punches out of the mix, Jackson's bass has an oily, yawning sound and Madison's drums roam across the landscape. There's a lot of funny music — "I Can't Get Started", with the leader whipping the mute in and out of the trumpet, is a killer — and some poignancy, even passion. "Baby, You Move" is slow and ribald and "Spontaneous" lurches off, free at last. A winner.

Blue Box's third LP has its extraordinary moments. It's like a dub album, a version record of their last set. Aside from the relatively conventional opener, the music is a skeletal sequence of beatbox patterns devised by Alois Kott and embellished only reluctantly by the trio. Trumpeter Winerichladen squirts over the top like Kondo in IMA, or like Miles in some strangulated acid-hell; I'm making it sound like tormented stuff, but it's light-hearted, engaging music. Although some of the tracks sound like an overwound musical box, it's a singular effort.

MIKE FISH

#### **VARIOUS ARTISTS LIVE AT THE KNITTING FACTORY (A&M CD 5242)**

Recorded: New York, December 1988–February 1989.

*St Croix (Curlew); Atsu Yoru No Kawa (Bosho); Dreamer By A Nick (Jazz Passengers); Herkness (Mark Dresser, Mark Feldman, Nils Lofgren); Spirits Of Flathead/Angel Eyes (Jazz Passengers); Tronicle (Scannens); Open Heart (Miracle Room); The Hard Wood (Curlew); Angel-Cover Blues (Hansuudens); Pezzer Party (Alva Rogers).*

#### **LIVE AT THE KNITTING FACTORY VOLUME 2 (A&M CD 5276)**

Recorded, as above.

*Part Of The Family (Chuck); Ghosts (Gary Lucas); Foy Lady (Odd Job); Orbital Inversion (Ikut Mori); Fred Frith, Mark Dresser; Some Kind Of Blue (Myra McLeod); Oak Dug (Sonny Sharrock); Silver Lining (Christian Marclay, Sonny Bennett); Love Buds (Odd Job); Pass Of The Clock (Joey Baron); Ramona, Drada (Glenn Velez, Lane Redmond, Steve Gorn, Scott Robinson).*

THE KNITTING Factory has become the principal focus of New York's downtown, East Village music scene, as well as featuring more established figures like Anthony Braxton, David Murray or Andrew Hill. These two volumes tend to concentrate on what are, in UK terms, lesser known names, but alongside more familiar contributions from the likes of Sonny Sharrock, Fred Frith or Joey Baron, while an imminent *Volume 3* will feature John Zorn, Elliott Sharp, Arto Lindsay, Marilyn Crispell and Andrew Cyrille.

Inevitably, the two hours-plus of music on these two discs is something of a mixed bag. The first thing to say is that no new stylistic agenda is set; indeed, if there is any discernible aesthetic at work, it is anti-style, or alternatively, any style goes as long as it gets twisted around in the works. The Knitting Factory reflects a fertile and often innovative scene, but it is also fragmented, dispensed, and occasionally eclectic to the point of absurdity. Re-cycling is always easier than inventing.

The first volume provides fodder for those who see a major guitar revival in progress; every selection features the instrument, while horns are thin on the ground, with the exception of Curtis Fowlkes and Roy Nathanson in the *Jazz Passengers* and the less emphatic George Cartwright in *Curlew*, although even they are counter-balanced by Marc Ribot and violinist Jim Nolet in the first instance, and Davey Williams and cellist Tom Corsi in the latter.

*Curlew* are a little disappointing in the rhythm department (drummer Pippin Barnett is rather heavy-handed for a band with considerable textural possibilities to exploit), but Corsi's duo with guitarist Hans Reichel (*Hand-sun-ton* - geddies?) is compelling, as is the string trio on "Harkening", although it's over-stretched. Both "Ironcide" (with Elliott Sharp) and "Open Heart" are variations on the power trio theme, but not new ones.

Instrumentation gets even more exotic on *Volume 2*, from Hawaiian guitar (on "Part Of The Family") to Filipino buzz sticks (on "Ramana"), with various other oriental instruments, not to mention Christian Marclay on turntables, but the musical mix is similar. Gary Lucas turns Ayler's "Ghosts" into a furious solo country blues on National Steel guitar. Odd Job murder Hendrix's "Foxy Lady", Sharrock cranks up the thunderous licks on "Dick Dogs", Baron combines percussion

and electronics on the meandering "Pause Of The Clock", and "Orbital Inversion" gets as weirdly abstract as you would expect from Frith and friends.

There is very little on either disc coming from overtly jazz sources, rock, blues, country, ethnic, electronic, and even contemporary classical - sometimes with, sometimes without, any significant degree of improvisation - are all more readily identifiable ingredients in the stew. Like I say, eclectic to the point of (pleasant) absurdity.

KENNY MATHIESON

#### HENRI TEXIER COLONEL SKOPJE (Label Bleu LBL 6523)

Recorded: Amiens, 12-14 July 1988



*Colonel Skopje, Wallow, In The Land Of Ephesus, Ladies Choices, Night Drive, P.M., Killing Time, Up To Late, Desperado, Il Passero.*  
Joe Lovano (ts, f, perc); John Abercrombie (g); Steve Swallow (b); Henri Texier (b); Aldo Romano (d)

#### ROMANO/LOVANO TEN TALES (Owl 053CD 3800532)

Recorded: Paris, 8 May 1989.

*Remembrance, Dragons Are, Yellow Shadow, Moon Match, Rain Season, Eternal Youth, Monologue For Two, Return Match, Sediment, Kona 1; Autumn In New York.*  
Joe Lovano (ts), Aldo Romano (d).

I'LL ADMIT that I've got an inbuilt bias in favour of the first of these two recordings because it's got two basses in it. The Sound-check style sheet doesn't permit me to tell you in the personnel listings that Swallow's is a

bass guitar and Texier's not, but you probably knew that already.

So why do I like a mixed baseline? Probably because the two instruments are more inclined to display their areas of contrast than their similarities when drawn into one musical context. And typified contrast is very much what this album is all about.

The sleeve notes are in French, mercifully protecting the non-polyglot from well-known typing error Christian Tartering's florid and laboured eulogising of the musicians appearing on the album. It's Texier's album, certainly, but as Tartering explains when he's forced to resort to fact, his role is not that of *astute*; only two of the compositions bear his name and the others are credited individually to his guests. This approach, or variations on it, seems to be widely employed in the construction of jazz albums at present and certainly in this case the excellent results are obviously a product of this come-as-you-are approach. The music is, I suppose, a kind of post-fusion; the styles of the individual pieces are as diverse as the composers involved. Overall, the recording serves as a well-organised introduction to the styles of each contributor, although several of the pieces seem to be shorter than they deserve to be.

The performances pay little if any lip-service to the notion of Texier as a unifying force; Abercrombie's peculiar jagged-edged lyricism and Swallow's vaguely sinister playfulness are well to the fore, and Lovano and Romano retain their own punchy, stropky styles. If their contributions are in any way tempered by Texier's patronage, their duo album sees them digging deeply into their own musical histories and serving up the results of their excavations in a glorious, powerful mess. They manage to jam 11 pieces into their 47-and-a-bit minutes and the results are pretty frantic for the most part. The music behaves like a bad-tempered animal looking for someone to bite, and is all the more fun for that.

Both of these consistently pleasing labels are distributed in the UK by Harmonia Mundi, so they're readily available should you want them. And you could do far worse.

TOM CORBIN

#### FIRST HOUSE CANTILENA (ECM 1393)

Recorded: Oslo, March 1989.

*Cartolina, Underfelt, Dimple, Sweet Williams, Low-down (Taylors), Hollyhocks, Madeline After Prayer, Shouting Brightly, Jay-Jay, Pablo.*  
Ken Stubbs (alto), Django Bates (p, ch), Mick Hutton (b), Martin France (d).

IT'S UNLIKELY that the cry "Loose Tubes alumni" sends the record-buying public out on to the streets in droves. But the past couple of years' sessions involving the likes of Mark Lockheart, Steve Berry, Iain Ballamy and Django Bates have displayed an accelerating originality and emancipation from the States—though more in composition than improvisation—that makes the local scene after the jazz boom recedes look a lot better equipped for the future than it did.

Ken Stubbs's alto sound comes in several guises. On the contemplative opening track he is very nearly Getzian in his rhapsodic swellings and swoonings, on Django Bates's "Underfelt" he exhibits a Garbarek-like self-containment, and on the up-tempo "Dimple" (another Bates original) he runs at an early Ornette-like gallop. Django Bates plays tenor horn on this piece (which he performs on with the agility of a valve trombone crossed with a flugelhorn) and as the two horns accompany each other in a baton-swapping blowing partnership in the open sections, Martin France maintains a springy, propulsive beat full of smacking rimshots and hassing riffs. It's done with an urgency that echoes Ed Blackwell in the 60s Ornette quartet and reveals a positiveness about France's playing not always evident with Iain Ballamy's band.

The writing for this album—shared by Stubbs and Bates, with one import from Loose Tubes' Eddie Parker—is pretty inventive, from the sleazy, softly wailing quality and sneaky melodic twists of "Underfelt," to the transformation of Bates's "Sweet Williams" into a gentle rocker, while "Low Down," a convoluted Stubbs tune, winds up like an impassioned moment in the life of the Keith Jarrett Standards trio as Django elbows and angles over thrashing France drums. Bates's "Hollyhocks," fast African with a bit of English folksiness thrown in, is also a powerful indication of how effectively genuinely local jazz ideas are being consolidated by this generation.

JOHN FORDHAM

## TREVOR WISHART VOX (Virgin Classics VC791108-2)

Recorded: York, Summer 1982; Paris, Autumn 1986; London, Summer 1988.  
Electric Phoenix: Judith Rees (soprano), Menel Dickenson (mezzo-soprano), Daryl Runswick (tenor), Terry Edwards (bass), John Whiting (sound design).

DUSTING OFF some of Trevor Wishart's early releases, such as the cassette of *Journey Into Space* with its lovingly gold-spattered labels, what remains consistent throughout is his almost evangelical zeal for demystification. Wherever there's an opportunity to confound the listener with quasi-mysticism, technical complexity, obscurantist aesthetics or



academic pedantry, Wishart can be relied upon to ignore it, preferring instead to describe his compositional approach rationally, elegantly and simply (but never simplistically). With this series of works being taken up by a major label he now has the wherewithal to do this on the widest possible scale, and more power to him.

*Vox* is a series of compositions which spans some eight years of creation, from 1980 to 1988, essentially for four voices with electronic/tape augmentation. And, despite the above assertions, this isn't easy music. Wishart's fascination not only with the 'musical' but also the communicative and interactive functions of the human voice has led him along an exploratory path which branches out into an infinity of possible avenues. Even at this stage in a career which has entailed public recogni-

tion, such as an IRCAM commission, and private scholarship, such as a weighty attempt to catalogue vocal sounds (a profound influence on, for example, the 'body music' of Jean-Paul Curtay), it's apparent from the *Vox* cycle that Wishart remains as excited and enthusiastic as ever about what is, after all, at once the most sophisticated and least explored of instrumental systems. This is overtly reflected in the music, in that the six pieces between them employ a bewildering variety of vocal techniques and structures, none of which are allowed to wear out their welcome during the course of the cycle but which are deftly moved to one side to make room for new approaches.

Wishart describes the compositions as 'sonic landscapes', but I'd say they were more comparable to islands, covered with a dense musical undergrowth which may seem more than a little forbidding when compared with sparser, more attenuated avant-garde vocal works such as Giles Swayne's *Cry* or Stockhausen's much-alluded-to *Stimmung*. Whether Wishart gave in to some undisciplined urge to cram as much of his accumulated knowledge of the voice as possible into this cycle or whether we've just grown less used to complex avant-garde musical statements in recent years depends entirely on your perspective.

But, whatever your preferred answer, this immaculately-crafted production not only contains a wealth of musical understanding. It also constitutes a sincere attempt, most readily comparable in this respect to Mimaroglu's writing for Cathy Berberian, to return the voice-as-performing-apparatus to the world of human communication. And, like much human communication, it's infuriating and fascinating by turns.

TOM CORBIN

## SARAH VAUGHAN AFTER HOURS (Roulette CDP 7 93271 2)

Recorded: No details, but original issue 1961.  
*My Favourite Things, It's My Time We Say Goodbye, Wonder Why, Easy To Love, Sophisticated Lady, Great Day, Till Wind, If Love Is Good To Me, In A Sentimental Mood, Varsity.*  
Sarah Vaughan (v), Mundell Lowe (g); George Duvivier (b).

## SARAH VAUGHAN LIVE IN JAPAN (Accord 557302)

Recorded. Tokyo, 24 September 1974.

*A Foggy Day, Poor Butterfly, The Leap Is Love, Raven Malibu, Willow Weep For Me, There Will Never Be Another You, Misty, Warm, Like Someone In Love, My Fanny Valentine, The Noises Of You, I'll Remember April, Watch What Happens, Bye Bye Blackbird.* Sarah Vaughan (vi); Carl Schroeder (p), John Gianelli (b); Jimmy Cobb (d).

AFTER HOURS, with no recording details, looks like one of those duff live recordings knocking around at budget price (only 32 minutes of music too). Don't be put off, though, it's a classic. This is the (relatively) young Sarah Vaughan, and for those who worship at Billie's shrine it's the nearest a mortal singer can get. Sarah was always a more rocco artist than her predecessor, but in both artists' mannerism came to take a hold, to varying negative effect.

The youthful purity of Sarah Vaughan's voice is captured in the near-perfect setting of the earlier recording – it's breathtaking, and doesn't fall so far short of the spine-tingling effect that was uniquely Billie's. Charles Fox, in his sleeve-note, dwells on the strangeness of the backing. In fact it's ideal; the quality of the singing becomes clearer. The controlled use of vibato, the flexible, instrumental phrasing with dangerous leaps and intervals – this setting exposes the risks Sarah Vaughan takes, but not the flaws, since there aren't any. She may be the nearest to an operatic diva jazz (for good or ill) has known, but her antecedents are, like Billie Holiday's, entirely from jazz.

If 1961 is still Innocence, by 1974 it's Songs of Experience. There's an arch, almost affected quality – though *Live In Japan* is a fine album, and Jimmy Cobb is great. There's more scat in the later recording also – on "Like Someone" and "I'll Remember April". On "Willow", she says she's forgotten the words and scats there as well. Before the last number, Ms Vaughan asks for requests. A lone Japanese voice pipes up "Thanks For Memory!" (no definite article). So she sings "Bye Bye Blackbird" instead. Reminds me of the old Ronnie Scott joke about requests. What a tribute to General Douglas MacArthur's Americanisation policy, though.

ANDY HAMILTON

**THE MELODY FOUR**  
SHOPPING FOR MELODIES  
(Chabada CD OH 19/21)

*Mission Impossible, I'm Insane, Chopin, Scifi Hifi, I'm Henry The Eighth, I Am, Arabesque, Ma Belle Marguerite, La Maman De La Melodie, Pargue Me Deque, Allegro Spiritoso, Papa N'a Pas Vieux, Automaat Gori, Lonely Dreamer, This Is My Lonely Day, Salswells Of New York, Working Is A Job.* Steve Beresford (p, v etc); Tony Coe (v, sax, cl); Lol Coxhill (v, m).

ELECTICISM, NOSTALGIA, parody, pastiche, postmodernism. Jazz in the 1980s seemed stuck between these reference points, John Zorn, Henry Threadgill, Loose Tubes representing three very different responses. The largely neglected Melody Four represent a very whimsical strand of postmodernist. This CD contains 26 outtakes, alternate versions and 'scities' and features the three perennial English schoolboys with modern jazz and free improvising backgrounds ransacking jazz, pop



and 50s tack nostalgia. It is petty, silly, frequently not all that clever and its 26 tracks are certainly too much in one go. Though it is very difficult to say why, I like it.

One reason it's good is that all of them should certainly know better. Another is perhaps because they come across as so incompetent and amateurish. Nobody could really believe in the reality of their waltzes (which owe more to the inebriate working men's club organist than the Viennese ballroom) and they can't sing either. But Coxhill's lovely soprano sax solo on "Lonely Dreamer", his brash tone ever perched between beauty and ugliness, and all of Coe's contributions, however corny, need no explanation or apology. They reveal a delight which, far from being rooted in contempt for their material, reveals a genuine and deep affection for even the most banal forms.

In the end they seem to say, "Look, I know this is crap, but I actually love it".

You even warm to the vocals, whose bathroom singer inadequacies offer a friendly sense of all-too-human fallibility quite at odds with, say, Zorn's nihilistic US Video/Advertising age style-switching. Instead of trying to pummel the listener with a daring succession of rootless fragments, they come across as good chaps having some fun. As quintessentially jolly English as Tommy Cooper or Morecambe and Wise.

RICHARD SCOTT

**BRÖTZMANN/OLIVER/KELLERS**  
featuring MANFRED SCHOOF  
IN A STATE OF UNDRRESS  
(FMP 1250)

Recorded: Berlin 4/5 March, 1989.  
*Certainly, Trolleying, Urinate, Berlin Grey For A Rainy Day, In A State Of Undress.* Manfred Schoof (tr, fltn), Brötzmann (saxes, trombone), Jay Oliver (b), Willi Kellers (d).

**BRÖTZMANN/SOMMER/PHILLIPS**  
RESERVE  
(FMP CD 17)

Recorded: Berlin 4 November 1988.  
*Reserve, On Walked BoP, Jopa De Nicaragua.* Peter Brötzmann (as, ts, bs, bcl); Günter Sommer (d), Burt Phillips (b).

**THE PETER BRÖTZMANN OCTET**  
MACHINE GUN  
(FMP 0090)

Recorded: Bremen, May 1968.  
*Machine Gun, Repetition, Mass For Hans Bessner.* Willem Breuker (ts), Brötzmann (rs, bs), Evan Parker (ss), Fred Van Hove (p), Peter Kowand (b); Baschi Niebergall (b), Sven Johansson (d), Han Bennink (d).

THE BODY of Peter Brötzmann's work is as big as Brötzmann himself, its state of health similarly ruddy, rude, vibrant. A glance at the catalogues listing 20 years of Free Music Production (FMP), the label he established with Joze Gebers, attests to his boundless resources of energy, the number of his own appearances being at once an exciting and forbidding prospect for this latecomer fan. So much to get through, so much more to come.

Taking the Last Exit to Brötzmann is hardly the best preparation for the range of his work.

## FAST LICKS

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*April's slower rapped up by Richard Scott*

He is a far more considerate accompanist than the virile, competitive bellowing of *Last Exit's* four components would suggest. On *In A State Of Undress* Brötzmann respectfully lets guest trumpeter Manfred Schoof set the tone. The latter draws lengthy melancholy lines over conventional rhythm settings, the players ready to burst restraints whenever they receive the cue. Upon Brötzmann's entry the quartet fires all its engines, grandstanding wildly until Schoof restores some sense of decorum, in so doing forcing a brief, lovely, yearning duet (at the tail end of "Certainly") when Brötzmann alternately raps at the underside of, and intertwines with, one of the trumpeter's moody trajectories. Apologies to Schoof if this makes him sound like he's Mantovani: throughout, he duels as keenly as he duets, but the interest for late Brötzmann watchers is his tenderising effect on the Berlin beast.

The *Reverb* CD raises two interesting issues, one logistical, the other musical. The CD's increased timespan allows whole sessions to be run without awkward time breaks. Though in keeping with the spirit of free music production, it does mean the longeurs between moments of intense creativity are no longer edited out.

The second issue is related to the first. Given that Günter Sommer is defiantly a drummer and not a percussionist, much of the opening 30-minute duet with Brötzmann is more dual-gauged than engaged, the pair racing along parallel tracks and rarely bending to meet. The method is in the short term breathtaking, Sommer taxing Brötzmann's stamina and powers of invention with tearing drum figures and rickety changes of pace marked out by tolling bellones. But over the distance you yearn for more than freeblowing raps and drum tattoos. The set really takes off once Barre Phillips joins in, for the 35-minute "On Walked Beep", the presence of a bassist straightaway expanding its musical texture.

Of the records under review here, the reissue of the Brötzmann Octet's *Machine Gun* is the southpaw punch that floors the listener. Recorded in May 1968, it's a roal noise *mini-work* coming out of and feeding back into the irresistible spirit of that moment. There is no more exhilarating noise than these choruses, when eight incomparably wayward players temporarily regroup to blast the roof off heaven.

BIBA KOPE

KOLNER SAXOPHON MAFIA: SAXFIGUREN (Jazzhaus Musik JHM 36CD); VARIOUS ARTISTS: STATGARTEN SERIES VOL 1 (Jazzhaus Musik JHM 1001 SER). The Mafia are a very confident and tight-knit six-six unit, largely overlooked in the current fad for all-reed lineups. Jazzlike movements, improvised passages, superbly choreographed stabbing textures, many-legged rhythmic motions reminiscent of ROVA, all jostle with more austere orchestral themes. Each piece is brimming with different colours, textures and combina-



tions of saxes, clarinets and flutes, mostly seamless but occasionally dense to the point where they become exhausting. The CD includes a strange 'medley' based around *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, though its relationship to the Beatles' original is not wholly clear.

The Beatles medley also features on *Statgarten Series Vol 1*, a Jazzhaus Musik sampler and not a bad place to catch up with some of the characters on this excellent label. Includes "Pizzicato" by Finkubertum, which is crackling trombone electrofunk; five powerful short duets by trumpeter Thomas Heberer and bassist Dieter Manderschied; Mafiaman Roger Hanschel's solo soprano; and "Wabun" by Mafia renoiseur Joachim Ullrich's ten-piece. Though the brief is wide, including thermo-nuclear jassfunk, a lot of the music here

successfully explores a similar space between jazz and The Great Beyond as Braxton's classic 70s Arista groups. Speaking of whom...

GENO ROBAIR/ANTHONY BRAXTON: DUETS (Rastman BRD 002); ANTHONY BRAXTON/MAX ROACHE ONE IN TWO - TWO IN ONE (Har ART CD6030). Three generations here: Braxton must have been listening to Roach's drums in his nappies, while percussionist Robair is one of his own students. *Duets* features master and pupil playing three of Braxton's compositions, two of Robair's and a collaboration, the wistful "Ballad Of The Children". The drifting motions of "Composition No 40D (+96 +108B)" are handled clearly enough and Robair's dry, spacious "Decline Of Reason" is nice, but "Composition No 86" sounds drab to me and Robair's "Counting Song" sounds like a workshop piece which never quite happens. Overall not bad, but probably for Braxton aficionados only.

The CD re-release with Max Roach, however, can be unreservedly recommended to everyone. This is freely improvised jazz of the highest order, offering one of the most exciting and accessible paths into Braxton's playing. Both men are incinerating, launching into a thoroughly absorbing wealth of rhythmic, melodic and timbral interactions which never let up. Classic, essential etc, etc. Check out their *Black Saint* set too, if you can find it, which is equally great.

WARREN VACHÉ AND THE BEAUX ARTS STRING QUARTET: WARM EVENINGS (Circord CCD 4392). At the other end of the Universe is Warren Vaché, a Bix Beiderbecke-influenced cornet player, blowing on a set of standards accompanied by a piano trio and strings. I'm surely not alone in normally taking pains to avoid this kind of music but Vaché is a fine musician with a lovely, warm, rounded sound. A touch syrupy on the strings? Yes. Corny even? Of course, and unhip in almost every conceivable respect, but this is sincere and pleasant music all the same. It's even taught me not to be so bloody narrow-minded in future.

TONY SCOTT: ASTRAL MEDITATION - VOYAGE INTO A BLACK HOLE; VOL 1: VOYAGE

INTO A BLACK HOLE; VOL. 2: ASTRALA; VOL. 3: ASTROGOGO (*Line CD/CD 9.500590 0, 9.500591 0, 9.500592 0*). Staying with the open mind and different universe themes, this is "space music" summoning "unknown dimensions beyond our realities". Three CDs/ hours of massed dissonant droning, whooshing synthesizer and, occasionally, clarinets, predictably laden with echo and reverb. Though some pieces are quite eventful, any sense of stated (gravitational) rhythm or conventional harmony/melody is absent and there is little sense of narrative structure or causal relationship, particularly considering the carefully programmatic titles. "Voyage" includes gong-like sounds, incredibly high-pitched whistling and overbubbled clarinets. "And The Beyond" is largely solitary, lowing clarinet, reminiscent of Music For Yoga Meditation. "Matrix Of The Unknown Universe" features vocal sounds in wispy, drifting peaks and silences while "Matrix Of The Unknown Dimensions" is apparently random pianoplinkings which do nothing, at agonising length. Similarly, "Golden Prophet Of The 21st Century" hovers pointlessly for over half an hour. "Prince Of Peace" and "Prince Of Power" are thick seas of sound, heavy with anticipation, which finally dissolve into a bubbling mass of random pitch-generated notes.

DIRECT SOUND: FIVE VOICES (*Intakt CD 015*). An impressive virtuoso display of singing, shouting and speaking in tongues. Greeje Bijma, Shelley Hirsch, Anna Homler, David Moss and Carlos Santos mainly sing in solos and duos, individual lines remaining intact. Classy, though more a display of individual technique, professionalism and polish than a celebration of emotion or collective communication such as Maggie Nicols or Phil Minton might create.

CHET BAKER: LET'S GET LOST, THE BEST OF CHET BAKER SINGS (*Capitol/Pacific CDP 7 92932 2*). A mid-price compilation drawn from the original classic '53-'56 recordings and not to be confused with last year's film soundtrack of the same name. Compared with the groaning stillness of those late 80s recordings even "You Don't Know What Love Is" sounds almost carefree. Obviously Baker lacked all the emotional and dramatic control of

the great jazz singers, or the sensual energy of a hunk like Tony Bennett, but his empty velvet monotone had a beauty all its own. Unprojected, ambitionless, frail, but everything is open and admitted rather than muffled by production or bravado. "I Get Along Without You Very Well" has a pale irony, while few could match the unembarrassed ease with which he negotiates the mind-boggling corniness of "Like Someone In Love".

BOBBY WATSON AND HORIZON: THE INVENTOR (*Blue Note CDP 7919152*). The opening "Heckle And Jeckle" is a vaguely embarrassing Horace Silver rewrite; how they do it straightfaced is beyond me! But the group is tight and springy and Watson's bright, alarmingly liquid alto is actually a lot of fun; on



the title track he seems to try to outwit the chords.

QUARTETT AND BRASS: CULLOO (*Line CDD 9.009190*). Culloo (which presumably translates as Colours) features a Dutch group playing mainstream European contemporary jazz with a dynamically rounded brass-band feel, reminiscent of some of Kenny Wheeler's bands. More than competently executed though its emotionally and texturally subdued impressionism make it more easy to have on than to actually listen to.

RICK MARGITZA: COLOUR (*Blue Note CDP 7922792*). These colours are fairly thin too; Margitza is a pleasantly creamy-toned, pop-

jazz tenorist. "Widows' Walk" has a nice, melancholy feel, "Colour Scheme" is despicable sub-Tom Scott TV detective music, "Ferris Wheel" is romantic light pop which Andy Sheppard and a legion of players do much better. Most of the rest sits somewhere between these three points. Possibly I'm not really the right person to ask, but this is mostly insipid music to me.

MICHEL REDOLFE: SONIC WATERS #2 (*UNDERWATER MUSIC 1983-1989 (Hat ART CD 6026)*). Nothing too cheering here, either, in these grimly clean gusts of digitally synthesized sounds. Whilst assuring us that Redolfi is undoubtedly an utter genius, the sleeve notes do not actually tell how this music was recorded: was it actually underwater or in a studio and designed to be played underwater? Either way it is interspersed with watery splashy noises to remind the forgetful, above-sea-level listener what the whole thing is about. Baffling.

KLAUS IGNATZKE GROUP: NEW SURPRISE (*Timeless CD SJP 324*). It's getting depressing now. Ignatzke's group play aggressively conservative hard pop. Contrary to the sleeve notes' declarations that the album represents "exploration rather than reinvestigation", and that "we are most definitely not dealing with 'old hat'", we most definitely are dealing with old hat. I can't hear a damn thing here.

SOYR: VECTORS (*HRCRD 52*). This Norwegian improvising big band play compositions blending aspects of jazz and contemporary music. Vibraphonist Rob Waring's title track gets the prize for this month's least sane piece of music - all crazy comic angles and deranged changes, like someone making fun of Braxton. Jon Balke's smoothly complex "Su Marina Ta" is a coolly dissonant harmonic/melodic blend echoing Barok or Messiaen, while trumpeter Torgun Solli's "Remembrance" and pianist Rune Klakegg's "Blyant Pa Papir (Pencil On Paper)" share an eerie intensity. Saxophonists Jan Angrensen and Nils Jansen stand out, as do Waring's vibes and the translucent vocals of Elin Rosseland.

BRIAN ABRAHAM'S DISTRICT SIX: IMOKOMA YABANTWANA (D6 002). Hooray! A nice surprise to end. The current incarnation of D6 are much more interesting than their recent *Late Show* TV appearance suggested. Nowadays, township jazz is just one element of their spectrum, especially under the compositional direction of Jim Dvorak, whose writing and trumpet really shine here, reflecting wide listening, including Miles and Miller and the free/contemporary fusions pioneered by such as Sam Rivers or Dave Holland and Barry Altschul. Abraham's drums are as passionately eager as ever and one of the band's best kept secrets. The vast-toned reedman Harrison Smith is fantastic. Amen.

## OUTLINES

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Tony Herrington *also* amazes the latest Latin

WHAT THE RECENT success of the Brazilian Lambada has proved beyond all doubt is that when World Music finally crosses over into the mainstream it won't have anything to do with roots, authenticity, the greening of the charts or the rejection of technology. It will be about bare bums on TV.

Remarkably, considering the sales figures, some major record companies have opted to look beyond the balance sheet and issue records by Brazilian musicians who are unlikely to end up in 11 European Top Tens or suffer the ignominy of a *News Of The World* sexpox. WEA, for instance, have recently released *O Samba*, the second volume in David Byrne's Brazil Classics series, and veteran singer/songwriter Gilberto Gil's *O Eterno Deus Da Dança*, whilst Island Mango weigh in with *Estrangeiro*, the latest offering from Gil's Bahian contemporary Caetano Veloso. The latter two offer up the now standard crossover mix of reggae, plaintive ballads and tropical funk all filtered through the *lingua franca* of the 48-track digital production job, whilst *O Samba* serves as a complement to Byrne's own Latin project *Rai Mami*, highlighting the kind of music you'd encounter, in between the Madonna clones and Pink Floyd bootlegs, if you ever found yourself down a back alley in a Rio Favela. For an object lesson in how to draw

sales of ten million plus from an unruly, retractive style like the acoustic, urban samba, check top *sambista* Martinho De Vila's "Baruto No Chão", then lend an ear to the record it's been lifted from, his great 1985 Braziloid LP *Bataqueiro*.

Further evidence of Brazilian musical life outside the Lambada comes courtesy of *Forró* (Globestyle), a rowdy compilation of the accordion-based music of the country's rural North-East; *Bluso Afro* (Capitol Intuition), which features the heavily Africanised grooves of Bahian groups like Ara Ketu and the great Olodum; and two LPs with an Airtro Moreira connection. Yana (sister of Flora) Purim's *Bird Of Brazil* (Sonet) was originally recorded in 1982 but has only now found a UK release. Was it worth the wait? Well, I have a thing about this kind of Cali-Brazilian pan-Latin

conventions of the genre.

Whilst Brazilian music vicariously enters the mainstream Colombia continues to dominate the margins, with both World Circuit and Mango licensing large chunks from the catalogue of the Medellín-based Disco Fuentes label. Two new compilations, *Cumbia Cumbia* (World Circuit) and *Suena Colombiano* (Mango), underline the multiple cross-referencing of influences that has come to dominate Colombian music in recent years. Both records contain tracks that sound as if they could have been produced in Kingston, Lagos, Havana or the East Harlem *barris*, as well as music that gives a more localised view of the indigenous *cumbia*, *porro* and *cavallero* styles. Get these then let them guide you to the following: a re-release of Peregrino y Su Combo Vacana's influential 1972 LP *Tropicalismo* (World Circuit); The Merino Brothers' accordion-led *Villaneta Dynamis* (Globestyle); the new Joe Arroyo LP, *Fare In My Mind* (Mango), which pushes the mercurial *juveto*'s music even further out into the Caribbean; and veteran, ex-pat Cuban violinist Alfredo De La Fe's *Salsa!* (Mango), a brilliant record that mostly forsakes the experiments of his 70s recordings with Eddie Palmieri in favour of music which aches with memories of pre-revolutionary Cuba.

Talking of veterans, the great *conjunto* Mongo Santamaría had a new LP out recently, *Oli Oli* (Concord Picante). Unfortunately it's a rather tired re-tread of the kind of Latin/jazz/R&B fusion with which Mongo made his name in the 50s and 60s. Better records in a similar vein include Poncho Sanchez's *La Familia* (Concord Picante), out for a while but worth mentioning now for its hard-hitting, percussion-heavy *montuno* sections; and, surprisingly, Bobby Hutcherson's *Amor Mando* (Landmark), a ruminative collection of Latin/jazz ser pieces that feature James Spaulding, Francisco Aguabella and yet another version of "Tin Tin Deo".

Finally, if you're not tempted by any of the above take advantage of two sensational reissues - The Allegre All-Stars' *They Don't Make 'Em Like Us Anymore* (Tico), a compilation of the group's first four groundbreaking 60s LPs, and *Bambolote* (Caliente), a famed collaboration between Eddie Palmieri and vibist Cal Tjader that also makes the samba-salsa connection. In their contrasting ways these two records highlight all that is great about Latin music.



jazz fusion so I'll say yes. For similar reasons I also give a big affirmative to Airtro's own *Samba De Flora* (Montuno). Much has been made of this record's combination of samba and salsa (the cast list includes Argentinian pianist Jorge Daltro and Nuyorican *juveto* Raphael José) but it's not without precedent, as the reappearance in the shops of Ricardo Marrero's 1977 *Vaya LP* Time amply demonstrates. Alongside Cortijo's *Maquina De Tiempo* and Randy Ortiz's *Segunda*, *Time* was an important record for the late 70s NY salsa community (and, I seem to recall, the late 70s north of England jazz/funk club community (and, indeed, the members of my local shanty team - Ed)) in the way it strained outside influences, from synthesizers and Brazilian rhythms to 60s mysticism and 70s disco, through a big band mambo format. Classic salsa but without sounding tied to the





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## THE WRITE PLACE

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### survey survey

A terrific response to our readership survey last month – thanks to all of you who completed and returned your forms. In the great Write Place tradition, we're this month publishing a selection of some of your 'other comments' as gleaned from the forms. And we thought we were a trifle odd . . .

#### you want a lot . . .

More business  
More detailed details of tours, club dates, etc  
More blues  
More world music  
More regional artists  
More grimecore  
More disreputable  
More British jazz  
More avant-rock  
More book special offers

More freestylin'  
More inter-generational  
More women, Rarities, anything  
More, more, more

#### what you really think of us

The Bible for jazz and new music  
Generally very readable  
Too much white space (not again – Ed)  
Still worth every penny  
Cut the crap  
Presentation, content and photos all brilliant  
Too expensive  
The writing is always of a high standard  
Please don't get too trendy  
Not as relentlessly trendy as it used to be  
Print too small  
The layout and presentation of Wire is impeccable  
Less whinging 'fopper than thou' attitude  
It would be difficult to overstate Wire's importance  
Don't waffle

An interesting blend of not-too-waffly words and smart  
pics  
Too obscure  
Very informative  
Keep up the quality – excellent!

#### come again?

What? No desert boots?  
Perhaps I am getting old  
Where was the fun?  
The bass guitar was invented in 1951  
Has Steve Wallhanson only got one jacket?  
Some of the reviews are too comical for words  
Has Mr Cook (I like it – Ed) really given up making  
those bloody (inter)sections? – Ed  
If Biba Koff is a real person, could you print a photo of  
him in a future issue? (He is, and no – Ed)  
I quite like your magazine  
Shorts!

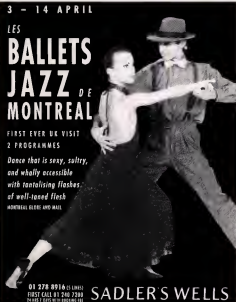
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It's True, Jack Daniel's Whiskey  
Is No Better Today Than  
When Jack Daniel Created It.

In 1866, Jack Daniel created the world's first Tennessee sippin' whiskey.

Then, for over 120 years, nobody did anything to improve it. Today's Jack Daniel's has the same rare taste as when Mr. Jack first made it. Which means it's still mellowed drop by drop. That's the way you've always liked it. So, we promise, we're still not planning any improvements.



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SMOOTH SIPPIN' TENNESSEE WHISKEY

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If you'd like to know more about our unique whiskey, write to us for a free booklet at the Jack Daniel's Distillery, Lynchburg, Tennessee, USA.



## Until now, you've only been able to treasure their recordings.

Take the world's most famous horn player, Louis Armstrong, and the musical genius whose harmonic and melodic innovations forever changed the course of modern jazz, Charlie Parker, and you have the first two legendary jazz personalities from the series of exclusive videos entitled "The Masters of Jazz".

"Satchmo: Louis Armstrong and the Twentieth Century", the 90-minute video leaves no aspect of his personality unexamined.

Even his birth date (4th August 1901, not 4th July 1900, as he had always claimed) is documented along with his childhood in New Orleans.

From his early years with King Oliver and Earl Hines to the All Stars in the 50's and 60's, a fascinating, humorous insight into his vivid personality.

So, if you want to know the meaning of charisma, don't miss it.

"Celebrating Bird: The Triumph of Charlie

Parker", uses rare film clips, photographs and interviews with Jay McShann and Dizzy Gillespie to provide a unique perception of Parker's private life from his youth to his tragic death at 34.

All the important events in Parker's life are touched upon, from this early career in his home town of Kansas City Mo., and his first meeting with Gillespie in New York to the disastrous trip to Los Angeles in 1945 and his conquests of Europe in the early 50's.

This video serves as an excellent introduction into the genius that was Charlie Parker, and will no doubt inspire some to investigate his recordings, a magnificent oeuvre indeed!

"The Masters of Jazz" series features rarely seen footage and exciting soundtracks of their finest recordings.

Each video costs £14.99 and is an exclusive direct mail offer. A small price to pay for the life story of a legend in jazz.

To start your collection of "The Masters of Jazz" please send your cheque/postal order for £14.99 plus £1 P&P per video to Direct Home Entertainment, PO Box 1479, London NW9 6JQ or ☎ 01-200 7000 Ext. 271 with credit card order.

Please debit my Access/Visa/Diners/American Express.

Card no:

Offers open until 30th September 1990 or while stocks last (VHS only). Open to UK residents only. Please allow 28 days for delivery.

Please indicate number of videos required:

"Satchmo: Louis Armstrong and the Twentieth Century" ☐

"Celebrating Bird: The Triumph of Charlie Parker" ☐

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